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ORGANIZED LABOUR IN SASKATCHEWAN: THE TLC YEARS, 1905-1945

by



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A THESIS

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ABSTRACT

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled, "Organized Labour in Saskatchewan: The TLC Years, 1905-1945" submitted by Walter J.C. Cherwinski in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

ABSTRACT

In view of the existence of a predominantly agricultural economy in the province of Saskatchewan, especially in the years before the Second World War, one might assume that a study of organized labour would lack significance. But the very presence of a movement from the beginning of the province, a movement which continued to exist and even grow, albeit slowly, was in itself important. At first glance, the structure and motivation of the trade unions in Saskatchewan were not appreciably different than their counterparts elsewhere, because they were an integral part of the North American and Canadian movements and this naturally had a direct bearing on their thinking and actions. But they were also initially largely peopled by recent arrivals from the British Isles, and this also had its impact on their economic and political thought. In addition, because of the rudimentary nature of the urban economy in Saskatchewan, the movement bore a particular stamp characterized by the presence of skilled craftsmen employed primarily in the construction industry and the printing trades until the latter half of the thirties. The only significant exception was the mining industry in the south-eastern corner of the province; the problems of union organization in that locality is a story in itself and has been examined separately in some detail.

Another conclusion common to a number of scholars is that the political and social background of Saskatchewan has been more radical than that of most provinces. It is one of the objectives of this project to examine the extent to which organized labour, usually considered a force of the left, compared with and contributed to this radical tra-

dition. However, the largest part of this study, based essentially on a wide variety of primary manuscript sources, is concerned with the historical development of the movement in the years 1905 to 1945, the years dominated by the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada. The nature of the provincial economy is constantly in evidence in relation to this development. In addition, this study attempts to examine other subjects intimately connected with the Saskatchewan trade union movement such as its political activity at all levels, its relationship with the provincial government, and the legislation under which it was forced to operate, its views of itself within society and its objectives for that society. Here again, ultimately the geographic setting stamped Saskatchewan unionism with a lasting trademark.

The fact that Saskatchewan cities constantly remained service centres for the immediately surrounding agricultural areas meant that the trade unions in the province never became very large. Thus, they were constantly and consistently dependent on outside assistance which was rarely forthcoming unless the local movement was threatened by some deviant ideology like the One Big Union or other such heresy. The rest of the time it was left to shift for itself, largely ignored. The result was a weak movement, divided by a myriad of issues as well as by geographic separation. Thus lacking cohesion and unity, it was especially susceptible to the vagaries of the provincial economic situation which almost decimated it during the thirties. New hope for strength, unity and expansion came during the Second World War, but lacking assistance, the new industrial unions were allowed to show the torch of unionism to greater numbers and the traditional movement which had dominated the scene for so long lost its preponderant position.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

A-CCL	All-Canadian Congress of Labour
AFL	American Federation of Labor
BLFE	Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen
B and MIU	Bricklayers' and Masons' International Union
CAR	<u>Canadian Annual Review</u>
CBRE	Canadian Brotherhood of Railway Employees
CCL	Canadian Congress of Labour
CCF	Co-operative Commonwealth Federation
CFL	Canadian Federation of Labour
CHR	<u>Canadian Historical Review</u>
CIO	Congress of Industrial Organizations
CLC	Canadian Labour Congress
CLP	Co-operative Labour Party
CPC	Communist Party of Canada
DND	Department of National Defence
GAI	Glenbow-Alberta Institute
GWVA	Great War Veterans' Association
H & REIA	Hotel and Restaurant Employees' International Alliance
IDIA	Industrial Disputes Investigation Act
ILP	Independent Labor Party
ITU	International Typographical Union
IWW	Industrial Workers of the World
LRB	Labour Relations Board
MJT&LC	Moose Jaw Trades and Labor Council
M and S	Manitoba and Saskatchewan Coal Company, Limited
MWUC	Mine Workers' Union of Canada

NIRA	National Industrial Recovery Act
NWLB	National War Labour Board
OBU	One Big Union
PAC	Public Archives of Canada
PAT&LC	Prince Albert Trades and Labor Council
RCIPA	Retail Clerks' International Protective Association
RCLA	Regina Civic Labor Association
RLC	Regina Labour Council
RLO	<u>Report on Labour Organization in Canada</u>
RT&LC	Regina Trades and Labor Council
SA	Saskatchewan Archives
SFL	Saskatchewan Federation of Labour
SGGA	Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association
SPC	Socialist Party of Canada
ST&LC	Saskatoon Trades and Labor Council
TLC	Trades and Labor Congress of Canada
UB of C & J	United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners
UFC(SS)	United Farmers of Canada, Saskatchewan Section
UGWA	United Garment Workers of America
UMWA	United Mine Workers of America
UPWA	United Packinghouse Workers of America
WLRB	Wartime Labour Relations Board
WPC	Workers' Party of Canada

INTRODUCTION

When one studies the development of organized labour in most places where it is a significant factor in the community, one comes away with an impression of an organic and orderly progression toward the ultimate improvement of the condition of its membership. Joseph G. Rayback's study, A History of American Labor is an excellent example. Except for a few minor setbacks, the economic, social and political well-being of the American artisan as well as the unskilled worker have been and are still being gradually attained with no ultimate end in sight. Granted, hard work and vigilance by union members were constantly necessary to maintain the impetus. In addition, at times economic conditions made the task of the union difficult, but over a period of time definite progress can be seen. An ever-increasing number of workers have been organized to defend and advance their interests. Moreover, they have been able to effect legislative changes to their advantage through their increasing collective strength.

In marked contrast is the situation of organized labour in Saskatchewan, the key to the difference being the degree of industrialization. The economy of that particular province was and still is predominantly agricultural, and this fact has had a pronounced impact on the nature, growth and development of its organized labour forces. Any sort of overview that assumes a continuous line of progress can only be partially applicable to the Saskatchewan labour scene. Although the position of the urban worker did improve, the major changes

came about because of outside forces and trends established elsewhere, whether social, economic or political. Progress was sporadic and at times labour's position even declined. The organized labour force in Saskatchewan was too small numerically, too weak economically, too poor financially, too divided ideologically, and too isolated geographically to be a determining factor in its own fate.

Ultimately, Saskatchewan's organized labour was constantly dependent on forces and institutions within and outside the province. The initial organization of the movement was imposed by outsiders when and only when it was deemed advantageous to expand in the province. These occasions of intermittent interest separated by almost studied neglect continued throughout the entire period. Furthermore, those unions which were established and continued to exist remained dependent on organizations whose strength lay either in the United States or in central Canada for servicing, expansion, inspiration and financial assistance. Any expressions of local initiative were soon thwarted by the perpetual lack of resources, both human and financial. The fate of the idea of a provincial federation for the province's unions is an excellent case in point.

Yet the weakness, division, and indecision were not entirely the fault of those involved within the movement. In fact, the particular environmental situation in which Saskatchewan's organized labour found itself was a much greater determining factor in its fate. The rather unsophisticated industrial base of the province has already been mentioned. The labour organizations operating within it were commensurately rudimentary. Furthermore, the cities were small and far apart, thus making any provincial unity of purpose difficult to achieve.

Severe climatic conditions caused annual slowdowns in the economy and seasonal unemployment in most trades. In addition, financial commitments for any given year were not made until a good crop was assured. Thus the overall development of organized labour was bound to be different.

As far as basic desires, hopes and aspirations were concerned, organized workers in Saskatchewan were in no sense different from their counterparts elsewhere. Their basic need was for self-improvement-- economically and socially-- in an industrial milieu. In their view, this could best be accomplished through collective action, thus giving them the opportunity to confront their employers on an equal footing. Through such collective bargaining their three basic objectives of higher wages, shorter hours and better working conditions could be achieved. There was a minority among them, as elsewhere, which took a more idealistic position and dreamed of a socialist utopia. But by and large the stress was on economic organization. Because the majority of those who were organized were skilled, they were successful in attaining most of these goals in times of prosperity. At times like these their numbers increased. It was the periods of economic dislocation which demonstrated the real vulnerability of the Saskatchewan trade union movement. Grain production was the basis of the provincial economy-- a hazardous business at the best of times-- and the urban worker soon realized that his welfare was tied to that of the farming community. In addition, realizing their precarious position and the fact that their fate was not in their own hands, Saskatchewan union members found that they had to moderate their demands on employers and on the government. Hence they had to

adopt different attitudes from more numerous and thus less vulnerable unionists elsewhere. Thus they reacted differently to certain issues compared with their brethren in central Canada. Their general lack of support for the protective tariff reflected both the differences in the two economies and the degree of dependence on the surrounding farming population.

Not only was the organized urban worker susceptible to the vagaries of an agricultural economy and a prairie environment: he early realized it. Accordingly, he decided that at least he should not antagonize the farmer by outlandish demands and radical action, as labour had done in ^{some} other parts of the country. Indeed, Saskatchewan labour tried rather to co-operate with the farmers for common ends. Only the history of the labour movement in the Estevan-Bienfait coal fields deviates from this pattern, and for this reason it has been examined separately.

Labour's co-operation with the farming community was limited to the economic sphere. Although the radical wing of the farmers' organizations made constant overtures to labour to form a farmer-labour political party, the unions backed away in most cases. Many of their parent bodies prohibited active political participation on a partisan basis, while others had had bad experiences with it and saw it only as another issue causing division within their ranks. However, in an ideological sense labour was very close to the progressive wing of the farmers in its objectives for society, and some unionists, as individuals, worked closely with the province's radicals--farmers, urban social democrats and intellectuals--to assist in creating the pronounced radical undercurrent in the province's political and

economic thought.

For the most part, however, this study of the history of organized labour in Saskatchewan--from the founding of the movement to the end of the Second World War--is an attempt to examine the growth and development of a sector of the economic community which by and large is by definition urban and industrial in an environment which is rural and agricultural. As such it will attempt to describe and assess the impact of the latter on the former, and in this way determine uniquely regional features evident in Saskatchewan organized labour. Thus, where possible and where necessary, events, trends and developments in that province will be compared with those in the rest of the country or in the rest of the continent.

The emphasis of this study will be on those unions affiliated with the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada. This approach was taken for two reasons, the first of which is obvious. In the period covered by this study the large majority of the organizations in the province belonged to the TLC, and the Congress movement is thus used as a point of reference as well as a point of departure for the discussion of other organized labour bodies, schism being a malady common to the movement. In a more pragmatic vein, the best and most complete sources in existence are those of the Regina Trades and Labor Council, a central body chartered by the Congress. These have provided a much more detailed and intimate view of the province's labour movement than would have been possible without them. Unfortunately, as only the papers of the Regina council are available, this sort of intimate detail will unavoidably place a Regina emphasis on this study. In addition, the writer has been forced for the same reason to generalize about the

movement in the whole province from the Regina experience. Fortunately, however, this situation was not as serious as it initially appears because not only did Regina rapidly become the largest organized labour centre in the province, leaving Saskatoon and Moose Jaw behind, but also it was the capital city where the government met and where organized labour met the government. Therefore, little of importance in regard to the provincial labour scene escaped the attention of Regina's unionists. Where differences existed between the workers in the various centres, they have been described and reasons sought for the variance. But while the cities in Saskatchewan might have differed slightly in the nature and extent of industrialization and in ethnic makeup, they were all forced to exist and operate as merely service centres for the agricultural population and organized labour within them must be examined and described in this light.

CHAPTER I

FOUNDATION AND RECOGNITION, 1905-1912

Outside of these associated with the fur trade, probably the first artisans to practise their trades in a serious manner were those who came west with the North West Mounted Police. Within their ranks were all sorts of tradesmen, and thus as part of their duties they provided many essential services for the communities that sprang up around police posts.¹ Later, other mechanics followed as the settlements became larger. These men had little to do with the police but were independent entrepreneurs, the stuff with which Western Canadian folklore is replete. They fulfilled functions of both labour and management, but as their enterprises expanded they had to hire for wages men who were similarly skilled. An excellent example of this process was the three newspapers established in Saskatchewan towns before 1885 (The Saskatchewan Herald, Battleford, 1878, the Regina Leader, 1883, and The Moose Jaw News, 1883), all of which operated printing shops in conjunction with the newspaper.

Initially, these frontier enterprises probably were staffed by men who had come west voluntarily, either from Ontario or from the United Kingdom. But the West was a land of promise and on this expectation expansion of business was relatively rapid. A construction industry was established to cope with the demand for buildings. The supply of indigenous mechanics proved to be inadequate.

The CPR, the Federal Government and local boards of trade all had agents in the British Isles, wooing working men with high-pressure spiels about the wealth to be made in this far corner of the Empire. The appeal was magnetic, especially when a man considered that he would be among his own kind where he could practise his trade in the manner to which he was accustomed.

While figures are lacking for the proportion of trade unionists who claimed the British Isles as their place of origin, census statistics for 1911 and 1916 indicate that the majority of residents in Saskatchewan cities were born in Canada or in the British Isles. The rural areas seem to have been the haven for those from continental Europe or the United States.² This "British" stamp on the province's trade union movement was evident throughout most of the period under discussion and it showed itself in many of the attitudes, activities and beliefs of the members.³

But the immigration agents did not tell the British artisan about the short productive season which was one of the prime reasons why wages were high. They never told him or others that there was a good chance that their lives would be those of itinerants, seeking jobs where the construction industry was active at that particular time. From the manner in which the picture was presented, he could only gain the impression that jobs were plentiful. The agents of the boards of trade were the worst offenders, in their attempts to inflate the labour supply to drive down wages.⁴

Despite the continuing influx of skilled workers to the Canadian prairies from the British Isles, where they inevitably had been members

of some sort of trade association, their numbers were still too few and too scattered to establish formal unions. Yet there were organizations among the North-West Territories' citizens that performed some of the functions of early unions, although their main raison d'être was political protest, or combating prairie isolation. The North West Farmers' Union first convened in December, 1883, to discuss common grievances, fitted the first category. In the second, the Grenfell Mechanics and Literary Institute was established as an open forum for the debate of contemporary and philosophical questions.

A similar organization was the Ancient Order of United Workmen, the first western Canadian lodge of which was founded in Qu'Appelle in 1892 "to endeavor to improve the moral, intellectual and social conditions of the members, and by wholesom [sic] precepts and fraternal admonitions to inspire a due appreciation of the realities and responsibilities of life." Toward these ends the Order endeavored to "hold lectures, read essays, discuss all new inventions and improvements, encourage research in art, science, and literature, and when practicable, to establish and maintain libraries...."⁵

Early unions tried to provide similar services, but more important, the Ancient Order also made provision for mutual sickness and death benefits for its members. Here, however the parallel ceased. In fact, the very name of the Ancient Order of United Workmen was deceptive. While it was open "to all white male persons, regardless of nationality, political preference or denominational distinction", it was merely another fraternal society which appealed to the "better" elements of prairie society.

An organization with an equally deceptive name was the Patrons of Industry, which established its first county associations in the North-West Territories during the 1890's. While it espoused "the rights and interests of agriculturists and laborers",⁶ its emphasis was on the former, as demonstrated by the fact that its bête noire was the tariff.⁷

Yet while these territorial organizations did pursue some of the goals and fulfilled some of the functions that unions were later to provide for their members in the form of complicated ritual, debates and lectures, sickness and death benefits, and machinery for political pressure, their primary function was to encourage the conviviality of association. But they did not include among their activities the function that unions would later provide, a function that was essential to a union, namely to bargain collectively with an employer for the daily bread of its members.

The first associations established in the Territories with collective bargaining as the primary aim were the various railroad brotherhoods that chartered lodges after the construction of the CPR. The first of these had Winnipeg as their home but with the extension of facilities and services at divisional points new lodges were created. As an example of this process, the Northern Light Lodge 127 of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen was chartered in Winnipeg in October, 1882. In January, 1887, Medicine Hat got Cascade Lodge 342 and in August, 1891, Brandon was graced with Wheat City Lodge 464. Moose Jaw too was a divisional point but it did not get a lodge of the BLFE until June, 1897, probably because few railroaders resided

there until that time.⁸ In Saskatoon organization came even later, when the CPR established a shop in Sutherland. Regina, never considered a railway town of any consequence, had only a Maintenance of Way local (No. 250) at the turn of the century.^{8a}

Yet, as the earlier discussion has demonstrated, there were skilled workers in the urban centres in 1900 outside of those associated with the railway. But the very fact that organization did not come about spontaneously is indicative of the vulnerability and dependence of these tradesmen. The impetus came from unionists elsewhere and only when they were good and ready to provide it.

The first non-railway unions to be organized in the area which was to become the province of Saskatchewan were, in order of formation, the Allied Metal Mechanics in Moose Jaw in December, 1900, followed by the Painters, Steam Engineers and Draymen (Teamsters and Owners) all founded in November, 1902.⁹ However, these organizations appear to have been short-lived, as was Regina's first non-railway union, local No. 1784 of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners, formed in 1904, but which collapsed in 1906 along with fourteen other Carpenters' locals in Canada to go under in that year.¹⁰

Much more permanent were the International Typographical Union locals 657 and 627 founded in 1905 in Regina and Moose Jaw, thus maintaining the ITU's reputation of being one of the first to organize in any given centre. But the work of the UB of C and J and the Typos were isolated efforts by lone organizers. The real inspiration for the organization of the tradesmen in Western Canada came in the spring of 1906.

The reason for the sudden interest of "Eastern" labour in their

unorganized "Western" brothers is unknown. It was probably a combination of significant numerical strength and the granting of provincial status to Saskatchewan and Alberta the previous year. But whatever the reason, the Manitoba Executive of the Trades and Labor Congress, together with a committee of the Winnipeg Trades and Labor Council, "took up the question of securing an organizer for the west." To finance the scheme, the TLC decided that "if the West could furnish half the funds, the Congress would furnish the other half." The proposal was that all unions contribute ten cents per capita. With this objective, they were visited in the following two months, but the results proved to be disappointing, with only \$150.00 being subscribed. But having been moved to action, the Congress provided the funds while the Winnipeg Council selected W.R. Trotter of the ITU as special Congress organizer for Western Canada. He was joined by W.H. Reeve, the president of the Winnipeg Council and representative for the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners, together with Andrew Smith of the Bricklayers' and Masons' International Union and W.N. Goodwin of the Brotherhood of Painters, Paperhangers and Decorators of America.¹¹

After leaving Winnipeg on July 19, 1906, Trotter went to Portage-la-Prairie, then worked his way down the main line to Brandon and Regina. In Regina he found "Trades Unionism an unknown quantity except for the Typographical Union." But he found that Reeve was working on the carpenters and Smith was doing the same with the bricklayers and masons. Seeing the promising situation, Trotter arranged for a mass meeting, and wired Goodwin to join the three of them. When he arrived, they made out a charter list for the painters and did

further work among the bricklayers and carpenters. They also agreed to meet the labourers at a later date. Most important of all, however, the organizing foursome made arrangements for the collection of new unions to nominate delegates to a trades and labour council.

Trotter found that this last step was necessary in Moose Jaw. There was a council already functioning, with delegates from the railway locals and the printers. But there was still substantial organization work to be done. A mass meeting was called and the city's bricklayers and plumbers both indicated their intention of seeking charters in their respective internationals. The process was completed on Trotter's second visit to Moose Jaw late in July. Smith assisted with the bricklayers.

Following his first trip to Moose Jaw, Trotter went back to Regina and together with his three colleagues inaugurated the Regina Trades and Labor Council, at a meeting held in City Hall on July 28, 1906.¹² After the Regina Council was established the four organizers dispersed. Still further organization work was done in Moose Jaw, Saskatoon and Prince Albert and then Trotter alone continued on to Medicine Hat, Calgary, Edmonton, Lethbridge, Nelson, Revelstoke and Vancouver.

Within a two week period Regina had been endowed with a trade union movement complete with council, substantial inroads had been made into the building trades by the international unions, and a good start on organization had been made in Saskatoon and Prince Albert. Except for Moose Jaw, the intrusion of another element into the existing urban society had been sudden. Yet, for the public at large, the experience did not seem to be overwhelming. For example, the Regina

Leader greeted the work of the four men from the East as

a boom of the biggest kind in the organization work among the various trades in Regina. When the printers organized a year ago they hoped that they would not be long alone as the only organization in the city....It is expected that in the course of a few months Regina will be one of the most thoroughly organized cities in Canada.¹³

The optimism of the Leader was a bit premature. The Trades and Labor Council expired soon after for lack of an executive. One man, the president, died of typhoid, and another became seriously ill with the same malady, while yet another left Regina for a job in another city. But within a matter of months the Moose Jaw Council came to the rescue, and in February, 1907, a reorganization was effected,¹⁴ with ten affiliated locals.¹⁵

Considering its inauspicious beginnings, the amazing thing about these men was the obvious enthusiasm and relish with which they pursued the affairs of the movement, especially when compared with the indolence which characterized their activities in later years. In fact, one can safely say that the Regina people led the entire province in the early period primarily because of the unique collection of unionists who made up the first council. The most active and therefore the most prominent were Thomas Molloy and Hugh Peat of the Typos, and Bill Cocks of the Painters and Decorators. They were articulate, well-read men who never hesitated to promote all the aspects of unionism. Under their direction an organizing committee was established to further expand the influence of the council. A union label committee was also elected to promote union-made goods, and to inform local unionists on which were not. To assist in this endeavour and to fulfill a large number of other

functions a newspaper, Saskatchewan Labor's Realm, printed its first number on May 31, 1907, under Hugh Peat's editorship. Also under the guidance of the council executive, the province's first Labour Day celebration was held in 1907.¹⁶ In addition, a branch of the Independent Labor Party was formed a month later, "to educate the workers to look after their own interests."¹⁷ Also, in the first two years of its existence--1906-7--Regina placed three of the four members on the Saskatchewan Executive of the TLC, while Moose Jaw placed the other.

But while Regina unionists had the enthusiasm, Moose Jaw had the numerical strength. It was a railway town and as the railroad was king it was also the largest and fastest growing centre in the province. It had everything going for it, so its prominent citizens thought.¹⁸ Not only was it a CPR divisional point but it was also the northern terminus of the Soo Line from the US midwest. Hence, from two directions the potential settlers came, disembarked with their worldly possessions, and proceeded to their homesteads. According to its residents in 1906, Moose Jaw, like Winnipeg, would never stop growing.

Also like Winnipeg, Moose Jaw was a recognized union town, though on a smaller scale. News travelled fast along the main line and unionists in the Manitoba capital knew that in January, 1906, some of Moose Jaw's railway brotherhoods had gathered and formed Saskatchewan's first trades and labour council. The ITU local 627, the city's only surviving non-railway union, was asked to join. Although no records exist to attest to the fact, it is likely that this group of unionists, working through their lodges in Winnipeg, were able to motivate the Winnipeg Trades and Labor Council to in

turn move the TLC to send out an organizer. Thus, when Trotter came to Moose Jaw in July, 1906, the enthusiastic council helped him immensely in organizing the unorganized. Through the joint effort of the four organizers and the council, locals of the Bricklayers' and Masons' International Union and the United Association of Plumbers, Gas and Steam Fitters' Helpers received charters within the next month.¹⁹ By the time of the organizers' departure, Moose Jaw had fifteen locals, eight of which were affiliated with the council.²⁰ By 1911 the total had risen to twenty-one.

By comparison, Saskatoon being smaller, its trade union movement developed later. In 1901 Saskatoon contained 113 souls and while by 1906 this had increased to 3,011, it had only half as many people as Regina and Moose Jaw.²¹ For this reason, Saskatoon craftsmen were virtually neglected by the team of organizers in 1906. Therefore, the organization of unions in that city was accomplished on a piecemeal basis by individual international representatives whose response was to a specific need in a specific craft.

A lodge of the International Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees had been chartered in April, 1903, and the Saskatoon local of the ITU organized in June, 1906, was the first non-railway union. Later that year a branch of the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners, a British union, was established, but it collapsed in 1907, only to be revived in 1911. A handful of other unions was organized after 1906, but because of the late start it was not until January, 1909, when there were seven unions in the city, that the decision was made to form a central body.²² The first meeting was held on February 15 and a TLC charter was granted later in the month with W. Youhill, of the ITU as

the first president. The new council embarked on an aggressive organizing campaign to enhance its delegate strength²³ and by June there were a dozen locals affiliated.²⁴ This process continued and by 1911 when the first Report on Labour Organization was published by the Department of Labour there were twenty-one unions in the Hub City.²⁵

Of the three cities in Saskatchewan possessing a serious trade union movement before the war, Moose Jaw remained virtually free of industrial unrest. In fact during the five year period 1905-1910 there were no major disputes in that city, thus leading one to assume that acceptance of organized labour by the populace at large came easily. The reason for this situation is obvious. Because unionism in the form of the railway brotherhoods came early in the history of the town, organized labour and the people developed together, and the inclusion of a few more unionists went virtually unnoticed. In addition, because of the significant role played by the CPR in the economic life of the community, it was realized by all citizens that if the existing unionists were content and satisfied it also meant the continuance of growth and prosperity. Most significant, however, is the fact that a large proportion of the people in the city were unionists. It was estimated by the Moose Jaw Times that of the 6,249 residents in 1906²⁶ 2,500 were members of unions affiliated with the Trades and Labor Council.²⁷ Although this estimate is greatly exaggerated when one considers that only eight of Moose Jaw's fifteen locals were affiliated with the Council,²⁸ it does indicate union strength and esteem when the public press exaggerated in its favour. The very fact that these unionists were respected by the populace made confrontation less necessary, but in turn it made them the most conservative union group in the province, a consideration that came

to the fore in a later period.

Furthermore, confrontation was futile for most of Moose Jaw's unionists when one considers that their employer, the Canadian Pacific Railway, was a large impersonal entity, extremely difficult to confront except on a national scale. And while their numbers were large within that small prairie community, they were insignificant in the national scheme of things where the decisions were inevitably made. Realizing this, they had a penchant for inactivity.

The principle of collective bargaining was generally accepted by most employers. Thus, the Moose Jaw Trades and Labor Council missed the opportunity to organize and co-ordinate a major strike, a test which soon established the true mettle of a council. In comparison, the Saskatoon central body faced such a challenge within weeks of its formation.

The dispute in question was significant for a number of reasons. It involved the unskilled, the most vulnerable segment of the work force and the most difficult to organize, and it involved the civic government, a body on which organized labour depended to set an example of decent standards for negotiations outside the governmental sphere. Also, in part, the dispute involved an issue which was relatively uncommon--the safety of the life and limb of the worker. The fact that this matter was at issue indicates the utter contempt in which the unskilled were held.

It appears that discontent had become increasingly manifest among the poor souls who were digging Saskatoon's sewer and water system in 1909. Besides the issue of safety, wages were extremely low, another condition common to the unskilled. Finally, they petitioned the Trades

and Labor Council to see if they could be organized. The council in turn approached the TLC which dispatched its area representative, Edward Stephenson, to look into the matter. He along with the organizing committee of the council created AFL Federal Labor Union No. 12801. The labourers wasted no time in affiliating with the council.

In June, 1909, a delegation from the Trades Council approached the City Council to see if anything could be done to improve conditions on works projects contracted for by the city. But the City Fathers gave no indication that something would be done. With this evidence, the Trades Council advised FLU No. 12801 to apply to the Federal Department of Labour for a conciliation board under the terms of the Industrial Disputes Investigation Act. In July, the Department complied: the first time the Lemieux Act was applied to a government body.

The Trades Council met with 12801 on two occasions and assisted the men in articulating their demands, which included an increase in wages from seventeen and one half to twenty-five cents an hour, adequate cribbing on all excavations in which men were working, and the payment of wages in cash on a weekly basis.²⁹ These demands were submitted to the conciliation board which included Stephenson, the TLC representative, and Alexander Smith, a local contractor. There was some difficulty in finding a chairman acceptable to both sides, but finally Senator E.J. Meillicke of Dundurn was chosen. Acting as examiners for the city were Mayor William Hopkins and Alderman Robert McIntosh, the chairman of the Board of Works. In the same capacity for the union were A. Sibley and Honoré J. Jaxon. The latter was a roving socialist lecturer who had been involved with protests of one kind or another since the

North-West Rebellion.

The board finally met on August 13, 1909, and spent the first few days in procedural wrangling. It was finally decided by the chairman that the union would present its case and the city would then have the opportunity of rebuttal.³⁰

A great deal of interesting information was brought to light by the witnesses called before the board in the fortnight that it sat. Wages on projects in Saskatoon were compared with those in other cities. It was proved that the cribbing on excavations was indeed unsafe and that in fact men had been injured by cave-ins. The testimony also revealed that the contractor on the projects in question was basically unscrupulous in that he had been consistent in cheating both the workers by withholding wages, and the city by using city water without paying for it.³¹

At this point the city offered the men twenty cents per hour, together with the assurance of adequate cribbing. The question of cash payment of wages was left outstanding³² but as nothing further appeared in the local press it must be assumed that a mutually beneficial settlement was reached in private between the union and the city.

While the dispute between the City of Saskatoon and the labourers was minor as disputes go, it was still the first battle fought by a fledgeling trades council. Because organization of Saskatoon's unions had been accomplished piecemeal prior to the formation of the Council there had been little fanfare or public outcry on the issue of collective bargaining, although difficulties probably had been experienced by some of the unions. But the Trades Council also must have realized that to maintain its strength and the strength of its affiliates it had to

convince the civic government, a continuous and consistent employer of labour, of the justice of its cause and its determination to maintain the principle of unionism.

Essentially the same situation applied in Regina, although on a much larger scale. A governmental body, in this case the provincial government, had to be convinced of the legitimacy of the trade union movement. But while Regina was equally as devoid of industry as Saskatoon, outside of construction and printing, the process took much longer and was much more painful.

Perhaps because organization of the city's craftsmen had been accomplished in a short period of time, the contractors felt intimidated. Whatever the reason, the new unions had a hard time of it. They had to face the contractors' union, the Builders' Exchange. For example, the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners, Local 1867, formed in June, 1907, faced the problem of getting their union recognized by the Exchange right from the start. Through the long, hot summer they persisted in trying to get their schedule (which included a closed-shop clause) recognized but with little success. The contractors persisted in employing union and non-union men on equal terms. Tempers began to fray as demonstrated by the following excerpt from the minutes of the Brotherhood:

It was then suggested by Bro[ther] Craig that our Business Agent & this Union go right after the Haslam Block & Put All None [sic] Union Men there into a Cannibal Melting Pot Until they lose their [sic] identity As Scabs and that Atkison [sic] be made to drive all the rats out [of] his Garrett [sic] and all corporation litter out of the City.³³

In a final desperate attempt at achieving total recognition the Brotherhood teamed up with the city's other union with jurisdiction over

carpenters, the United Kingdom-based Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners, to present a joint draft agreement to the Exchange on September 12. It called for a ten hour day at thirty-five cents an hour, time-and-a-half for overtime and supervision by a unionized foreman.³⁴ Nothing was mentioned about a closed-shop. Thirteen of eighteen contractors complied and the carpenters struck the recalcitrant five. Two more companies settled but the other three held out until October 3 when the union backed down, its five dollar a week per man strike fund exhausted, and the men returned to work under the conditions in effect before the strike.³⁵

In 1908 the situation was essentially the same. In this particular instance, all the building trades except the Plasterers worked through the Trades and Labor Council to negotiate with the Builders' Exchange for all the affiliated trades. The talks on a new schedule began in January and when nothing was decided by May the Bricklayers' and Masons' local seceded from the Council.³⁶ This decision coincided with the fact that the Bricklayers had a more important problem of their own in their estimation. Here again, a government contract was involved. The contractor on the Royal North West Mounted Police barracks then under construction insisted on using non-union men alongside union artisans, contrary to the rules of the organization. This particular issue came to light in June, 1908, but by mid-July there was little hope of settlement by peaceful means. On July 17 a strike threat was made but there was no indication of support from the rest of the city's unions. The initial unity was showing signs of weakening, partly because of the earlier action of the bricklayers, and partly because the men were becoming tired of fighting for the second year in

a row. With such a short productive season, many of the rank-and-file realized the futility of spending even a small part of the summer on strike. Apathy was setting in and the executives of some of the unions contemplated fines for those consistently absent from meetings.

Although the fledgling labour movement in Regina had difficulties from the beginning in achieving the principle of collective bargaining, including closed shop conditions, its first struggles were minor and only serve to point out the stresses and strains with which the unions had to contend. Yet, even before these difficulties were resolved the building trades were faced with an issue of even greater moment. On July 1, 1908, the provincial government announced that Peter Lyall and Sons of Montreal had been awarded the contract to construct the new legislative building in Regina.³⁷ The announcement came as a bit of a surprise to unionists in Regina. They had little to complain about in regard to the provincial government prior to that time. There had been issues in the past, particularly in regard to the use of prison labour while citizens were unemployed,³⁸ but these difficulties had been resolved after delegations representing labour interviewed the government.³⁹ The government knew the views of labour on the subject of granting contracts to out-of-province firms. Labour had voiced its opinion on this subject ever since the proposal for the legislative buildings had been adopted in 1906. Hence, on July 1, 1908, the Regina Trades and Labor Council condemned the government for its action and in order to preserve what it could, passed a resolution that

...the Executive committee wait upon the Govt to ascertain what provision had been made to ensure local workmen being employed on the buildings in accordance with the promises made by the Govt last year.⁴⁰

What was probably more irritating to labour was the fact that the Lyall firm had a traditionally bad reputation in regard to its relations with its workers. With this in mind, the bricklayers' union sent a report of the conditions in effect in Regina in their trade to both the Lyall firm and the provincial government.⁴¹ But even though the premier, Walter Scott, realized that the Montreal company was a political embarrassment, particularly with an election imminent ⁴² he also realized that if the province was to have an edifice befitting its stature quality rather than local interests would have to prevail. So, in August, 1907, Professor Nobbs, of the McGill University Department of Architecture, was engaged to supervise the competition for a suitable design.⁴³ From this point on the affair was out of the government's hands. In November, 1907, the design of E. and W.S. Maxwell of Montreal was chosen and the Maxwell firm in turn chose Peter Lyall and Sons over a Regina syndicate, even though the latter's tender was \$213,000 lower than the architect's estimate.

While the provincial government probably had no intention of getting involved in any sort of industrial dispute, if any unrest was likely to occur, it could not help but be involved. As a matter of course, a fair wage clause was inserted in the contract with the Lyall firm calling for the payment of the going rate for all trades. This clause gave labour the opportunity to confront the government if the fair wage was jeopardized in any way. More important, however, was the fact that the legislative building was the largest public works project in the province to that time and labour had to establish a foothold on such projects or forever hold its peace. Thus, in spite of all good intentions, the Liberal government became involved in almost two years

of industrial unrest which took on classic dimensions--there was the shrewd superintendent for the contractor who had long years of experience in dealing with unions, and he tried every ploy to thwart their efforts; there were the youthful labour organizations trying to manifest their united strength; and there was a touch of violence as tempers became frayed.

The string of strikes began on May 3, 1909, when the carpenters walked out when their demand that all men working as carpenters on the site receive thirty-five cents an hour was not met, but after meeting with Mr. Lecky, the superintendent, the men returned to work the next day.⁴⁴ Of greater consequence and more dramatic was the strike of the labourers who walked off the site on May 22. This was the least likely group to take such action, which is indicative of the hard feelings that must have been aroused. In August, 1906, Trotter had attempted to organize the labourers but with no success, although on his return visit the following spring he did establish briefly a local of the International Hod Carriers' and Building Labourers' Union. But it was dissolved, reorganized and again dissolved on the day of its re-formation because the numerous ethnic groups involved could not agree on a secretary.⁴⁵ The Trades Council, dominated by the building trades and realizing the threat the unorganized unskilled posed to skilled craftsmen, tried to organize a labourers' local in August, 1907, and again in August, 1908, but with the same degree of success.⁴⁶ But with the problems on the public buildings early in 1909 the labourers approached the council to reorganize the union and on May 30 Local 203 of the International Hod Carriers' and Building Labourers' Union received its charter, with more than 200 members. The language problem was settled by dividing the

local into two sections, the first for those who spoke English and the other for those from continental Europe.⁴⁷

A reporter from The Morning Leader described the militancy of the new union in the following manner:

Led on by a marshall [sic] armed with a dinner pail, which he wielded valiantly and strenuously instead of a baton, a party of some sixty or seventy labourers from the parliament buildings marched through the streets to the east end on Saturday afternoon, with blood in their eyes and a "win or die" look over every countenance.⁴⁸

At issue for the 168 men involved was an increase in wages of seven and one half cents per hour to bring the rate to twenty-five cents per hour. With the formation of a formal union on the 25th the Trades Council approached the government, at which time it was agreed that the men would return to work pending an inquiry, with whose findings the contractor agreed to comply.⁴⁹ But the contractor would not give up without a fight. To counter the Trades Council's contention that the going rate for ordinary labourers was fifteen to twenty cents and seventeen to twenty-five cents for first class labourers, the firm swore that it could get at least fifty men in Regina and "thousands" in Winnipeg to work for seventeen and a half cents at any time.⁵⁰ But the government came down on the side of the men and ordered that the average wage for each class would apply, retroactive to the day they returned to work.⁵¹

The hod carriers and building labourers walked out again in late August for some unknown reason⁵² but the dispute must have been insignificant and short-lived because it escaped the eyes of the daily press.

The dispute which demonstrated the real mettle of P. Lyall and Sons, and especially that of Mr. Lecky, involved the bricklayers' union

and began in January, 1910. Although tension had been building up for some time over a number of matters, the real issue revolved around the ultimatum issued by Lecky that if the bricklayers refused to lay plaster blocks at less than the standard fifty-five cents an hour, the work would be done by labourers. Following futile protests the bricklayers walked out on January 15.⁵³ On the 17th T.M. Molloy, the first president of the Regina Trades and Labor Council, who had since become Provincial Fair Wage Officer, appeared before the union to canvass its views. Following this he solicited the opinion of E. & W.S. Maxwell to establish under whose jurisdiction the laying of plaster blocks fell. The firm's opinion favoured the union.⁵⁴ Lecky, however, would not be moved, even when informed of the decision. But the government's hands were tied until it was proved that the contract between the government and the Lyall firm had been violated by the firm's refusal to pay the established (or current) rate of wages. Until a signed statement was produced stating the fair wage for the laying of plaster blocks, nothing could be done.

There was a flurry of activity as both the union and the government sought evidence on the matter. The union approached its locals in Winnipeg and Toronto as well as the firm responsible for supplying blocks for the building. Molloy wrote to the Dominion Fair Wage Officer,⁵⁵ and the Premier, in the East on business, canvassed firms in Ottawa, Montreal and New York, including the New York Permanent Arbitration Board. All the evidence was uniform in its assertion that bricklayers always laid plaster blocks.⁵⁶

Even in the face of this evidence Lecky continued to procrastinate. He said that the bricklayers could go back to work after he returned from

his two week sojourn in Montreal, where he was to consult with the company. The men finally returned to their jobs in mid-February after the government ordered the Lyall firm to pay the established rate of fifty-five cents per hour for the laying of plaster blocks.⁵⁷ At that particular moment the bricklayers felt that they were in no position to protest the fact that even though they were now laying blocks they were doing so beside non-union men. It was the carpenters who first decided to try and establish the principle of the closed-shop, triggering a near general strike among building trades in the city.

The carpenters in Regina had come close to striking in August, 1909, when the Builders' Exchange had refused to accept a new wage schedule they had submitted, charging that the union's "lumber butchers" were not worth more than the old thirty-five cents an hour rate. But lacking the sanction of the international, and the financial backing that went therewith, the pending strike was postponed.⁵⁸

Perhaps significantly, the carpenters' strike began the day after May Day, 1910, but the situation had been developing ever since February, when a new schedule had been drafted calling for a wage increase, shorter hours and the "employment of Union Men only."⁵⁹ This time there was no backing down from the closed-shop principle and when negotiations finally broke down the ultimate weapon was employed. This time, however, the dispute was not limited to one union, because the electricians and plumbers walked out with the carpenters,⁶⁰ signifying that the Building Trades Council had taken over from the Trades and Labor Council and was co-ordinating the closed-shop campaign. In addition, the dispute was not confined to the Legislative Building site but had spread to all construction projects in the city, indicating an

all-out war against the Builders' Exchange.

On May 3rd strike-breakers were brought in, the first time that the contractors felt that such action was necessary, but it only tended to convince the uncertain of the seriousness of the situation, and they walked out in sympathy. But the exchange seemed to be prepared to go to any length. On the 9th five strikers were arrested after a complaint was lodged by a contractor of disorderly conduct and intimidation.⁶¹ The incident brought immediate cries from the carpenters' union that local officials were taking sides in the dispute, and in a press release issued on the 11th they charged unfair discrimination by the police, who were referred to as "uniformed lackeys."⁶² The Liberal Morning Leader supported the strikers editorially, also charging local officials with intimidation resulting in a "gross miscarriage of justice."⁶³

In the meantime, the painters' and plasters' unions walked out over the closed-shop issue, leaving only the bricklayers and masons still at work. On the same day, the 9th, the building trades unions called for the intervention of the federal Department of Labour in the dispute. Everything remained quiet while both sides awaited the arrival of F.A. Acland, the Deputy Minister of Labour. The only significant occurrence was the reshuffling of the Builders' Exchange with the infamous Mr. Lecky assuming the presidency.⁶⁴

On his arrival in Regina on the 27th, Acland met both the Building Trades Council and the exchange to discover whether there was any chance of successful conciliation. After several in camera discussions with the council he convinced the building trades to give up their demand for the closed shop. The exchange made what its members felt to be a

fair compromise but it was rejected by the council. The process was repeated a few days later.

While the discussions were going on two things occurred to complicate the situation. The painters' union, which had agreed to settle on the 6th of June, was informed that in future they would not deal with the individual contractor as they had in the past but with the exchange. Realizing this, the painters decided to form a co-operative to do contract work on their own, and the carpenters, plumbers, steam-fitters and electricians threatened to follow suit if the exchange did not become more conciliatory.⁶⁵ The second incident was less pivotal to the discussions between the exchange and the council, but it did demonstrate the animosity created by the dispute. On June 5 Peter Clayton Foley, an organizer for the carpenters was arrested for striking a man while under the influence of alcohol. The man was carrying a saw and square and Foley allegedly thought he was a strike breaker. At the trial it was discovered that the victim was merely a homesteader on his way to build a shack. But whoever the man was, Foley claimed he was the victim of mistaken identity, a fact which was borne out when the real assailant, a local carpenter, confessed to the crime.⁶⁶

The strikers finally went back to work in the middle of June after an agreement was signed on the 14th. Although the closed-shop principle had been abandoned, the new contract which was to expire in December, 1911, called for an across-the-board wage increase of ten cents an hour for most of the unions involved.⁶⁷

While the principle of the closed shop was not achieved in the six week building trades strike, this dispute, along with the numerous other strikes which occurred in Regina in 1909 and 1910, was the most

important ones to take place in the province in the pre-war period. All of them involved, in whole or in part, the legislative building. As has been pointed out, the project was the most impressive public work to be undertaken to that time, and for many years thereafter. Undoubtedly, craftsmen came from the entire province to work in Regina and everyone there realized that in order to establish any sort of future for organized labour in Saskatchewan the government would have to be convinced, because indirectly the government was the largest purchaser of the services offered by the province's unions. The government, in turn, recognized the legitimacy of the workers' claims, at least to fair wages.

There were other disputes besides the ones described. Although there were none in 1911, the year following saw the largest number of strikes (fourteen) to that time. But the same sort of industrial unrest as had been witnessed in Regina at the end of the first decade was not in evidence. Granted, all but one of the strikes involved the building trades, but in all but one case the point at issue was the question of wages. All were relatively short and the settlements reached were salutary, with at least some of the demands being granted.⁶⁸ In addition, the disputes were between individual unions and their employers, with no evidence of great co-ordinated efforts such as Regina had seen.

The number of strikes dropped to five in 1913 but their nature was still the same. The explanation is simple. The years 1911-13 were the "boom" years in Saskatchewan. Bumper crops brought expansion and optimism. Immigrants flocked to their homesteads and the cities expanded proportionally to meet the needs of the expanding rural population. Building permits, always an excellent gauge of urban growth,

jumped from \$17,857,308 in 1911 to \$33,270,781 in 1912 for the province as a whole while in the cities the increase was from \$13,474,937 to \$23,521,661.⁶⁹ Prosperity and optimism throughout the entire period 1905-1913 made the establishment of at least the basic framework of unionism relatively simple. By the latter date there were ninety-nine local unions in the province registered with the Bureau of Labour. Of these, forty-four were from the railway brotherhoods, forty were in the building trades and six represented the printing trades,⁷⁰ indicating that the three basic industries in Saskatchewan cities and towns were organized.

Except for the ~~British-based~~ Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners, which had several locals in the province for a time, the structure of the various unions was American, with the result that there was at least a nominal affinity for the AFL and the ideas and ideals of its president, Samuel Gompers. Yet the membership by and large was from the British Isles, and thus had a background steeped in the socially active and conscious British trade union movement. In the initial scramble to get the movement established and recognized, schizophrenia resulting from this situation did not become particularly evident until a later period. Yet the milieu within which these American unions with their British membership had to operate was having its effect on them. Even in an eight-year period the movement had taken on indigenous characteristics which would be of greater consequence later.

The ease with which the labour movement was established in Moose Jaw, as indicated by the lack of industrial unrest, placed a permanent stamp of conservatism on the city's unions, especially as

they were dominated by the conservative railway brotherhoods. Conversely, Regina had no railway unions to speak of, and her unionists tended to be more active, also realizing that as the provincial capital where activity was centred, they had to demonstrate their strength. Saskatoon's unions were much later developing and thus had not established any patterns by 1913.

But in spite of apparent strength, closed shop conditions were not achieved except by the highly skilled printing trades, indicating the weakness, vulnerability and dependence of the movement as a whole. For example, little organization work was accomplished by the local unions or the trades councils. Outside funds and manpower were necessary, and these were supplied only when the AFL, the TLC or an international union deemed expedient. Locally because of the rudimentary nature of the provincial economy, this same dependence was demonstrated by the high position that government public works--federal, provincial and municipal--played in the eyes of the labour movement. Most of the printshops that employed union men could not survive without government contracts. The building trades relied even more on government money to provide the "big" contracts which would employ numerous craftsmen for long periods. Unionists also depended on such jobs to set the example for the whole industry in terms of fair wages, hours and working conditions. When disputes occurred that seemed irreconcilable, the unions were quick to call on government agencies to use their good offices to settle the disagreement. The 1909 strike of Saskatoon civic workers and the strike of Regina construction workers a year later amply demonstrate this fact.

Such strikes were an infrequent occurrence. Most were of short

duration and involved merely wages, hours and working conditions, the reason being that the extremely short productive season--May to October--made long strikes a severe liability to both the employer and the unions. But the unions were at a greater disadvantage. Their members, especially if they were carpenters, bricklayers, masons or labourers, had to make enough in six months to last the year. Thus, a contractor with enough financial resources to get the "big" contracts could also outlast the unions, and force their members back to work short of their objectives. Variations on this situation were to constantly influence the labour movement in Saskatchewan and shape its character.

FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER I

¹E.g. RCMP files, RG 18, A-1, Vol. 7, File 366. Note supplied by Professor R.C. Macleod of the University of Alberta.

²Census of Prairie Provinces, 1916, p. xxxi, Table 19 and pp. 148-9, Table VII, pp. 218-9, Table XXIII.

³Royal Commission on Industrial Relations, 1919: Minutes of Proceedings, evidence of W. Wilson, p. 1146.

⁴See chapter IX for a more detailed discussion of the problem.

⁵Government of Saskatchewan, Provincial Secretary's Office, file No. 2588, "Constitution of the Supreme Lodge, A.O.U.W.", M.W. Sackett to Territorial Secretary, March 31, 1905.

⁶S.A. pamphlet file "Constitution of the Patrons of Industry of Manitoba and the N.W.T." (1894 revision), p. 3.

⁷Ibid., "The Political Position of the Patrons", p. 3.

⁸The earliest rail union lodge established in Saskatchewan was the Brotherhood of Railway Firemen, established in Moose Jaw in 1890, according to Dr. E.A. Forsey, former director of research for the CLC, in a communication to the author.

^{8a}Bureau of Labour Report, 1911, p. 46.

⁹American Federationist, Dec., 1900, Nov., 1902: The Labour Gazette, 1902, p. 895. These references also were supplied by Dr. Forsey.

¹⁰The Labour Gazette, Feb., 1907, table pp. 889-891.

¹¹Report of the Proceedings of the Twenty-second Annual Convention of the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada, 1906, p. 18 (hereafter cited as TLC Proceedings, with the year.) See also The Voice, July 20, 1906.

¹²TLC Proceedings, 1906, pp. 71-3; The Morning Leader, July 30, 1906; The Voice, Aug. 3, 1906.

¹³The Morning Leader, Aug. 4, 1906.

¹⁴The Voice, Feb. 22, 1907.

¹⁵TLC Proceedings, 1907, p. 23.

¹⁶See Chapter IX for a more detailed discussion of the union label, the union press and Labour Day festivities and their impact on Saskatchewan's unionists.

¹⁷Sask. Labor's Realm, Oct. 25, 1907.

¹⁸PAC, Laurier Papers, 209762, resolution to Laurier from Moose Jaw Liberal executive, n.d.

¹⁹The Voice, Aug. 17, 1906.

²⁰TLC Proceedings, 1907, p. 23.

²¹Canada, Sessional Papers, (1907), No. 17A, p. xx.

²²The Voice, Feb. 5, 1909.

²³Ibid., April 2, 1909.

²⁴Ibid., June 11, 1909.

²⁵Report on Labour Organization (hereafter referred to as RLO) 1911, pp. 74-5.

²⁶Canada, Sessional Papers, (1907), no. 17A, p. xx.

²⁷Moose Jaw Times, Aug. 7, 1906.

²⁸Proceedings, 1907, p. 23.

²⁹The Daily Phoenix, July 26, 1909.

³⁰Ibid., Aug. 14, 1909.

³¹Ibid., Aug. 17 and 18, 1909.

³²Ibid., Aug. 21, 1909.

³³United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners No. 1867 (Regina) Minutes, July 25, 1907 meeting.

³⁴The Daily Standard, Sept. 25, 1907.

³⁵The Labour Gazette, October, 1907, p. 469.

³⁶Ibid., June, 1908, p. 1428. Also Bricklayers' and Masons' International Union No. 1 Minutes.

³⁷The Morning Leader, July 1, 1908.

³⁸Saskatchewan Labor's Realm, Dec. 29, 1907.

³⁹Sask. Dept. of Public Works file #111, Robinson to Peat, Jan. 24, 1908 and Jan. 28, 1908.

⁴⁰Regina Trades and Labor Council (hereafter RT & LC) Minutes, July 1, 1908 meeting.

⁴¹B&MIU #1 Minutes, July 7, 1908 meeting.

⁴²SA, Scott Papers, 52241, Scott to Cass Gilbert, Sept. 15, 1908.

⁴³Ibid., 52167, Scott to Gilbert, Aug. 15, 1907.

⁴⁴The Morning Leader, May 4, 1909; The Daily Standard, May 3 and 4, 1909.

⁴⁵TLC Proceedings, 1907, pp. 61-3; The Labour Gazette, Feb., 1908, tables pp. 978-983 and 984-6.

⁴⁶RT&LC Minutes, Aug. 17, 1907 and Aug. 21, 1908 meetings.

⁴⁷Ibid., May 24 and June 4, 1909 meetings; The Labour Gazette, Aug. 1909, p. 170.

⁴⁸The Morning Leader, May 24, 1909.

⁴⁹Ibid., May 25 and 26, 1909.

⁵⁰Sask. Public Works file #118, P. Lyall and Sons to Robinson, May 26, 1909.

⁵¹Ibid., Scott to P. Lyall and Sons, June 9, 1909.

⁵²Ibid., J.E. Fortier (Clerk of the Works) to E. & W.S. Maxwell, Aug. 27, 1909.

⁵³The Bricklayers' and Masons' International Union No. 1 minutes give a detailed account of this dispute on a day-to-day basis and have been used as the basis for this discussion. Where government records and newspapers have been used, these have been cited.

⁵⁴Public Works file #118, Telegram Robinson to E. & W.S. Maxwell, Jan. 18, 1910 and Maxwell to Robinson, Jan. 18, 1910.

⁵⁵Ibid., Molloy to McNiven, Jan. 21, 1910.

⁵⁶Ibid., Affidavit from H. Andrews, Jan. 27, 1910 and Scott to Robinson, Feb. 12, 1910.

⁵⁷The Morning Leader, Feb. 14, 1910.

⁵⁸The Daily Standard, Aug. 19, 1909.

⁵⁹Public Works file #118.

⁶⁰The Morning Leader, May 2, 1910.

⁶¹Ibid., May 10, 1910.

⁶²Ibid., May, 11, 1910.

⁶³Ibid., May 13, 1910.

⁶⁴The Labour Gazette, June, 1910, p. 1442; The Morning Leader, May 18, 1910.

⁶⁵The Morning Leader, June 7, 1910.

⁶⁶Ibid., June 8 and 9, 1910.

⁶⁷See The Labour Gazette, July 1910, p. 123 for a full text of the agreement.

⁶⁸Bureau of Labour Report, 1912, p. 41.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 15.

⁷⁰Bureau of Labour Report, 1913, pp. 36-43.

CHAPTER II

ALIENATION, DISENCHANTMENT AND REACTION, 1913-19

Unions, like armies, march on their stomachs. Generally, their interests are economic, and they act accordingly. They may have espoused causes that had humanitarian ends, but in most cases their means have been influenced by economic considerations. Passivity marked periods of plenty, as evidenced by the first couple of years of the second decade in Saskatchewan. There were disputes, but these were caused by a desire for a share of prosperity. The settlements were amicable. But as conditions worsened, immediately prior to and during the First World War, the response was different. The number of disputes declined at first, only to reach unprecedented numbers as frustration, anger and bitterness gained ascendancy over the emotions of the work force. The malaise was general throughout the country, but the reaction was most extreme in Western Canada. But while the same conditions applied in Saskatchewan, the response there was much more moderate, due largely to local conditions and the influence of these on the province's organized work force.

Although wheat production remained high during 1913, the Saskatchewan economy declined in response to a widespread recession experienced in that year. In turn, urban areas suffered and the value of buildings erected in the province's seven major urban centres declined by thirty-one percent from the previous year's record of over

twenty-six million dollars.¹ In response, the number of disputes dropped from fourteen in 1912 to five in 1913, job security being more important than higher wages.

At the same time, local employers, especially in the building trades, in an attempt to cut labour costs, began advertising widely throughout the British Isles for craftsmen, greatly misrepresenting the conditions that would greet the immigrants if they came.² With the coming of winter, the immigrant craftsmen only added to the unemployment problem to the point where the situation became grim. T.M. Molloy, the Commissioner of the Bureau of Labour, estimated unemployment as the worst on record. In Moose Jaw, only thirty percent of the skilled workmen were working and even the CPR had laid off a large number of men. On New Year's Day, 1914, the overall estimate of men out of work was from 1,500 to 2,000 and this number increased to 2,500 by mid-February, 1914. The City Works Department was providing jobs for periods of two days each to keep men off the relief rolls.³ In Prince Albert the Board of Trade placed the unemployment figure at fifty percent higher than any previous year, while in Regina the figure was up only 25 percent, with 120 families and fifty single men on relief. There were 450 craftsmen looking for work in Saskatoon, and there were 160 cases of actual destitution.⁴

The summer of 1914 brought with it only slight improvement. Industry generally, and the construction industry in particular, were very slack. The value of buildings erected in the province's seven major urban centres amounted to only \$4,368,368, a substantial decrease from the previous year's total of over eighteen million dollars.⁵ The situation was aggravated by a less than average crop. Under these

circumstances there were only two disputes in that year, and both were motivated by attempts to stem wage cuts.⁶ For those employed in the building trades the conditions that prevailed during the summer of 1914 made saving for the inevitable winter virtually impossible. By November there were already 1,200 men unemployed in those trades affiliated with the Moose Jaw Trades and Labor Council, with another 200 in Prince Albert. Both the provincial and municipal governments scrambled to ease the suffering. Labour bureaus were set up to find work for the unemployed⁷ while those in desperate straits laboured in municipally operated wood yards.

These efforts by the various levels of government fell far short of demand, and with widespread unemployment the first to suffer were the unions. Fifteen Saskatchewan locals folded in 1914, the highest mortality rate being among the building trades.⁸ To stem the tide, mass meetings were called to demand action. One meeting of the unemployed in Moose Jaw on April 18, 1915, went as far as to pass a resolution petitioning the Prime Minister to provide passage to Britain where jobs were rumoured to be plentiful.⁹ When no action was forthcoming the unemployed in Moose Jaw appealed directly to Prime Minister Asquith, but with the same result.¹⁰

Those unionists who felt that their position did not warrant a return to England had two other means of escape. Many took up farming either for the first or second time. Still others decided on a stint in the expeditionary force brigades that were being mustered throughout the winter of 1914-15.

It was this very war that had begun on August 4th that was in part responsible for the hardship of Saskatchewan's urban work force. The expansive wheat economy before 1914 brought with it a commensurate expansion in the construction industry to meet the needs of the rural

areas. Money was plentiful and the citizenry took full advantage of future earnings. The recession of 1913 slowed down the pace of investment and the war brought it to a virtual standstill, at least as far as the construction industry was concerned. Money was taken out of urban expansion and reallocated to the war effort, the benefits of which fell largely to the more industrially sophisticated eastern cities. The effect of the war on the urban economy, and especially on the building trades is best shown again by the value of construction in the primary urban centres of Saskatchewan. While the figure of \$4,368,368 might have appeared small alongside the record twenty-six and a quarter million dollar figure registered in 1912, the amount dropped to a mere \$729,463 in 1915. There was a slight increase to \$853,332 in 1916, to \$1,492,778 in 1917 and to \$2,388,258 in 1918 but when the rate of inflation was considered the real increase was probably minimal.¹¹ But while the economic impact of the war was almost immediate the social consequences for Western Canada and especially for Saskatchewan were not felt until much later.

Generally speaking, Saskatchewan's unionists welcomed the war in the same manner as most Canadians. Democracy was at stake, and more important, the Mother Country had a part in defending it, and her sons, at most two generations removed from her shores, would return to "do their bit." Special smokers were held in honour of the unionists who enlisted and those that stayed behind passed resolutions preserving their membership, jobs and seniority, provided that their dues had been paid up to the date of departure. Certain locals excluded men of German origin from their organizations ¹² while others such as the Saskatoon Typographical Union 663 contemplated establishment of a fund

to buy a machine gun for some militia unit.¹³ Throughout the conflict, most unions managed to send Christmas parcels to their members overseas, usually through the women's auxiliary, and many locals subscribed to bond issues to the limit of their resources. But such efforts, one suspects, were based on duty rather than desire as the war dragged into its second, third and fourth years.

If one fact must be stressed in regard to the war and organized labour in Saskatchewan it is that unionists realized that the boom years had created false hopes and that in reality they were an economic minority with few powers, little influence and less respect. While their eastern counterparts prospered in war industry, they languished. With a lack of investment capital in the province they were made even more dependent on military and related contracts. While such jobs were few, the cost of living rose commensurate with that in the East, partly because of the scarcity of some commodities, and partly because the wages paid to eastern workers drove up prices. Furthermore, the rumoured wastage and inefficiency of the government in regard to the war effort, the incompetence of the officials, both elected and appointed, and the astronomical profits made by the suppliers of the tools of war caused a definite credibility gap between labour and the "interests", especially when workers were accused of a lack of patriotism for asking for a fair wage on government contracts.¹⁴ But the escalation of frustration was gradual in spite of the conditions under which they laboured. There was a definite emotional response to the war and therefore most unionists adhered to the 1915 TLC declaration "that it was the duty of the Labour world to lend every assistance possible to Great Britain and her Allies."¹⁵

The pronouncements of 1915 contrasted sharply with those of the following three years and the federal government bore the brunt of the criticism. Those who traditionally advocated pure, non-partisan government were given a more sympathetic hearing, particularly when the Conservative administration persisted in imposing its will--which in the opinion of Saskatchewan's unionists was the will of Eastern business--for the sake of the war. In fact, for an increasing number, the government became progressively more repressive in its actions.

Following the initial enthusiasm for the war, Saskatchewan's unionists lived with their problems with relative indifference to the situation outside of their own bailiwick. Wartime controls were accepted as necessary evils. But when it was rumoured in 1916 that the manpower policy was in need of change there was a marked increase in interest. National registration was to be the answer and from the ranks of labour came almost immediate opposition. The fear was consistently expressed that registration of manpower would be merely a prelude to conscription and that these men would be gleaned from the ranks of the working class. Registration also meant that those men that were redundant in a particular area would be moved to one where their services would be more valuable to the nation. The radical New Westminster Trades and Labor Council threatened a general strike in May, 1916, to emphasize its opposition to anything resembling conscription.¹⁶ But the National Service Board was created by Order-in-Council on October 5, 1916, "to facilitate recruiting by a sort of voluntary coordination of labour in the various industries with army requirements and to obtain a National registration of man-power."¹⁷

The following few months saw the government bombarded with

criticism of the scheme, and accusations that it was merely a means of facilitating future conscription. Labour's suggested alternative was that wealth should be registered and conscripted before manpower.

But the protests were in vain and the registration cards arrived in Saskatchewan on January 2, 1917, giving every man between the ages of sixteen and sixty-five the honour of signing. At this point the gravity of the situation became evident to local labour. The actions which resulted were not only significant in themselves but marked the beginning of the alienation of Saskatchewan and Western labour from their Eastern confreres.

The TLC executive committee had met with R.B. Bennett, the Director General of National Service, and Prime Minister Borden late in December, 1916. After receiving the promise that there would be no coercion or penalty if "correct and conscientious replies" were given on the cards, and an assurance that there was no connection between registration and conscription, the central labour body agreed to support the Board's request and recommended compliance to all its affiliates.¹⁸

Western Canadian unionists were not as amenable to the Board's suggestions and promises. The Calgary Trades Council felt that with the registration scheme an attempt was being made by "the vested interests of Canada to obscure the real issue, for reasons which are obvious", and thus called for a special Congress convention to iron out differences of opinion between Canada's unionists.¹⁹ Winnipeg unionists were even less willing to compromise with the Board and passed a resolution refusing to sign the registration cards because they believed that the Congress executive had been duped by the

government.²⁰

Saskatchewan's unionists, generally speaking, were in sympathy with the western position, although the degree of opposition to registration varied from city to city. Saskatoon's stand was quite moderate. The men there realized that registration was a fait accompli. What they desired was a special TLC convention to formulate a united policy on the administration of the National Service Board, particularly in regard to the maintenance of post-war job security and the protection of property of those men who were called up.²¹

The reaction of unionists in Moose Jaw was similar to that of the Winnipeg Council--outright opposition. In their opinion registration was merely "the thin edge of the wedge for furthering the idea of conscription."²² In Regina, on the other hand, the mood was less certain and it changed rapidly. On Christmas Day, 1916, George Sturdy, the conservative, reliable president of the Regina Council publicly stated that he had no strong objections to the National Service Board, although there were some questions still left unanswered. His opinion was that most unionists concurred in his views and that "only the Socialist faction of trades unionists would offer any opposition to the scheme if any was offered."²³ But the "Socialist faction" must have had some influence because a meeting was called for January 3 to discuss the whole matter of the registration scheme. The assembly in Trades Hall, alleged to be the largest gathering of unionists ever in Regina, was also probably the most heated. The resolution which resulted from the lengthy, noisy discussion demonstrated that the executive of the Trades and Labor Council had lost the initiative. The wording was strong in the extreme and it summed up the collective

frustrations of the working men accumulated over a number of months. Realizing fully that Canada was at war to maintain the Empire, the meeting also contended that the working class was bearing the major burden of the war. They were prepared to continue to do so but not "to bear the double burden of the war and the profit takers." In their opinion, the double load was contrary to the spirit of democratic government in view of the fact that labour was not sufficiently represented in the government. Thus, those present would refuse to sign the registration cards until such time as the Prime Minister had redefined his stand in relation to "his own friends, the financial and industrial magnates and the numerous officials to whom his government is paying large salaries." But as this was unlikely, the meeting called for the replacement of the Borden government by a more representative body.²⁴

Press reaction to labour's action was generally critical, but the trades council still went ahead and sent out 500 copies of the resolution to all other trades councils, council presidents and labour newspapers. Copies were also sent to Borden, Bennett, Laurier and all members of Parliament with special covering letters.²⁵ Similarly, the support of Premier Martin was solicited, even though the registration scheme had been sanctioned by the provincial government.²⁶ Throughout January and February, 1917, other influential organizations such as the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association were canvassed in an attempt to make them aware of labour's plight, but by March the enthusiasm of the rank-and-file unionist had waned. He probably filled out his registration card, motivated by a fear of legal reprisal if he failed to do so. Yet, within three months the prediction of the radicals came true as Borden, faced with a manpower crisis overseas, announced on May 18 that

compulsory military service would be enacted.

This time the Congress executive showed itself less willing to co-operate with the government. On the same day as Borden's announcement, TLC president, James Simpson stated:

The Government has not commanded the respect and confidence of the labour organizations of Canada in its administration of the country's affairs during the crisis....He [Borden] has not taken the organized labour movement of Canada into his confidence, nor has he conferred with Labour's chief representatives since he returned [from Europe], and until such time as he does we are justified in assuming that Conscription is unnecessary.²⁷

But the West's opposition was stronger still. Calgary's unionists demanded the conscription of the country's entire wealth before manpower was even considered. From Vancouver came the demand for a general strike referendum if conscription was passed, while Winnipeg expressed its opposition to compulsory service and demanded a referendum on the matter.

This struggle against conscription continued unabated in Western Canada's more industrialized cities until its final enactment on August 18. Vancouver labour formed an Anti-Conscription League late in May. Speaking on its behalf in Winnipeg on June 2, the Manitoba labour MLA, F.J. Dixon, barely escaped with his life when a group of returned soldiers attacked the meeting. Similar clashes continued in other centres throughout the summer.

In the meantime, in Regina the initial response was one of agreement with other western cities, but ultimately labour succumbed to local pressure. The Regina Trades and Labor Council greeted the first Congress statement "with applause" on May 22, but when the press canvassed labour opinion there seemed to be three divergent opinions

prevalent. Some continued to parrot the old line of "wealth before manpower." Others felt that the government should go to the people first, while still others opposed compulsory service under any circumstances.²⁸ But an advertised mass meeting had been called for May 31 to establish a consensus and it appeared that the radical element would once more gain the ascendancy. This proved to be a tactical error, because 150 returned soldiers and new recruits showed up at the Labor Temple, outnumbering the civilians. There were some present who criticized the government but they were immediately shouted down. Instead, resolutions were passed concerning the high cost of living and the problem of food speculation. The primary resolution pledged allegiance to the King and the Empire, support for the government in its efforts "to place men in the firing line in France to defend our homes and the lives of our women and children" and expressed hope that the "Leaders of all parties and creeds" would be consulted before any future measures respecting recruitment were adopted.²⁹

There is no doubt that the presence of the soldiers had a moderating effect on the deliberations of the meeting, but the explanation for the moderate tone of the resolution passed in comparison with those on registration goes much deeper. Registration meant possible displacement, while the effects of conscription were best summed up by a serviceman present when he said that "...if conscription was adopted here, it would not affect very many of those present, not in khaki, who were engaged in trades useful to the nation. The men conscription would affect would be men on the street corners and in the pool-rooms."³⁰

The discussion in May, 1917, to all intents and purposes made

conscription a dead issue in Regina and probably in the rest of the province. But there were other matters that irritated the sensibilities and the ideals of some or all of the province's unionists.

The manner in which the Military Service Act was administered was a case in point. Under its terms, certain individuals who refused to serve because they were conscientious objectors were being jailed.

The Regina Council attempted to initiate a campaign on their behalf at the request of the Winnipeg Council, but with discouraging results.³¹

The Wartime Elections Act, which elected the Union Government, which in turn enforced the conscription act was viewed by many as particularly odious legislation. While many, being of British origin, had little liking for aliens, the fact that the act disenfranchised a certain segment of the population offended their sense of fair play. Still others condemned the act because it threatened to lead to "the formation of a military caste" by favouring the wives of servicemen.³² In addition, those in western Canada, where the act had its greatest impact, viewed it as "one of the most pernicious measures ever foisted on this or any other country" and another attempt to concentrate power in the East.³³ Added to these economic and social ills was the influenza epidemic which struck fear into the hearts of many, especially in the cities.

The very fact that unions were organizations bent on improving the lot of their membership indicated that they were not inclined to resign themselves to fate. To help alleviate economic distress many unions resorted to various co-operative schemes, an avenue traditionally used by labour at such times. All the province's trades and

labour councils discussed co-operative enterprises at great length³⁴ and the Regina Council welcomed all sorts of representatives of co-operative societies.³⁵ In September, 1916, a committee of the council was struck to examine the feasibility of purchasing coal in carload lots which in turn could be purchased by members of affiliated unions.³⁶ In the same vein, the Prince Albert Council announced that it would establish a co-operative store.³⁷ But before many union members could buy products co-operatively they needed incomes. Thus, continuous pressure was exerted on all levels of government to create works projects and to provide low rental housing for those who were chronic relief recipients because of the slackness in their trades.³⁸

More important than co-operative ventures and pressure on government bodies as a barometer of growing militancy of the labour movement in Saskatchewan during the war was the increased political activity in all centres. But one must remember that these were craft unionists devoted to the principles of the TLC, the AFL and the various affiliated international unions. As such, a labour party was anathema to the long-held principles of all, especially the latter two. Yet the fact that at the 1917 TLC convention the formation of an Independent Labour Party was recommended, is indicative of the esteem in which labour was held by the two old parties. A leader was chosen to contest the 1917 federal general election and thirty-six candidates were nominated across Canada, two of these being from Saskatchewan. Another ran on a Liberal-Labor ticket, but without formal ILP support. The results, however, were disappointing.

The same taboos against political action applied at the provincial level, but again labour candidates contested the 1917 provincial

general election. However, no labour men were elected to the provincial legislature until 1921.

Substantially more success was obtained in municipal elections. Labour candidates could dwell on urban issues that had a wider appeal than within the framework of larger constituencies. Besides, municipal politics were deemed to be non-partisan, and unionists could thus participate without fear of conflicting with the principles of Gompersism. For this reason, civic politics had been of major interest to all the trades and labour councils ever since their inception, but the war and its resultant dislocation and disenchantment with elected authorities brought a real flurry of interest, and numerous labour candidates were elected to aldermanic and school board positions.³⁹

The fact that there was a very evident increase in political activity during the war was a concrete indication that a more active, and in certain cases a more radical element was gaining the upper hand within the ranks of organized labour. The reaction in Regina to the registration question is a case in point. While the rise of the radicals was prevalent in labour nationally, the trend was more evident in Western Canada, where the conditions made the rank-and-file more amenable to the more militant activists. Saskatchewan labour was no exception. The men who had helped to found the movement in the province were a decade older and fully a generation behind the activists in their ideals and aspirations. The activists believed that they could do something concrete about a class struggle which to them actually existed and which could be seen daily with the gross inequities which the war tended to enhance and perpetuate.

Equally visible to these men was the marked economic discrepancy

between East and West and the fact that Eastern unionists, while materially more prosperous, also had more sympathy with a seemingly blind and oppressive government. For example, at a labour-government conference on labour's position on war problems which met in mid-January, 1918, all the representatives were from the central provinces. While those present realized the regional disparity in terms of representation, they assumed that they could speak for all of Canadian labour because "many of the subjects to be considered had already been declared upon by them [those from the West and the Maritimes] at various Conventions of the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada and that in all our conclusions due consideration of previous Congress declarations would be given."⁴⁰

Yet the fact remained that the representation at the TLC conventions themselves was heavily weighted in favour of the central provinces. Except for Winnipeg and Vancouver, only cities in Ontario and Quebec had the hotel facilities to accommodate TLC gatherings. Distance and relative poverty prevented most Saskatchewan unions from sending their full contingent of delegates. In addition, central Canadian unions, while being better off and closer to convention centres, also had greater voting strength on the basis of the Congress rule of one delegate for every one hundred members. The problem was best illustrated by a resolution passed by the Regina Trades and Labor Council:

Whereas in our opinion the Trades and Labor Congress Conventions are not attended as fully as they might be, owing to the very high cost of travelling and hotel expenses of delegates from far off towns and cities, And whereas in our opinion the convention should have delegates from all its affiliated bodies as far as possible, so as to get a general knowledge of the existing conditions in every district in the Dominion, Therefore be it

resolved that we the Regina T. & L. Council go on record as favoring the Trades Congress of Canada defraying the expenses of delegates....⁴¹

The Congress, however, remained oblivious, resulting in a confrontation at the 1918 Convention that had far-reaching repercussions at a later date.

Meanwhile, the growing militancy of the organized Canadian--and especially Western Canadian--worker was being increasingly demonstrated by the fact that he was resorting to the strike more often, indicating that his respect for the war effort had declined. While there had been only 152 strikes in the period 1914-16, this figure jumped to 141 in 1917 and to 169 in 1918.⁴² For the same period in Saskatchewan, there were only two disputes in each of 1914 and 1915, but in 1916 the number had jumped to six. In 1917 there were only five and in 1918 there were nine. But in the case of the nine disputes in 1918, 1,015 workers were affected with an accumulated loss of 24.6 years in work time, indicating that they were long drawn out affairs. Regina was the hardest hit, claiming seven of the disputes, with the building trades taking the lion's share.⁴³

Commensurate with the increasing militancy of the labour movement was the fear of its ultimate result as expressed by public authorities, both publicly and privately. In spite of the mistakes that were being made due to haste, inefficiency and patronage, most government officials were conscientiously trying to win a war. Their concern for labour was real, because without the co-operation of labour the domestic war effort could be drastically delayed. Some effort was made by the federal government to seek labour counsel on problems affecting the movement. The conference called in mid-January, 1918, to

establish labour's position on war problems is an excellent example. On a later occasion Samuel Gompers, the venerated president of the AFL was allowed to make a short speech to the House of Commons as "it would have a pleasing effect upon organized labor in Canada." Later, at the suggestion of the Minister of Labour, Gideon Robertson, copies of the speech were distributed to every labour organization in Canada.⁴⁴

The efforts of the government were sincere, but one must suspect that the Cabinet did not realize that the trade union movement was not united and that in Western Canada the TLC and Samuel Gompers were falling increasingly out of favour. Western restiveness was viewed in the first instance as merely unpatriotic, but as agitation increased and strikes became more prevalent a conspiracy connected with events in Russia and Europe was suspected. The American Industrial Workers of the World, which had made inroads into British Columbia and Alberta, was especially suspect. Its members were viewed by political authorities as "a very dangerous, socialistic and perhaps murderous lot" and "a little money properly spent now in learning their anticipated movements, will save the Country thousands of dollars!"⁴⁵

But in Saskatchewan the reports of IWW activity continued to be conflicting. Military intelligence sources reported in August, 1918, "...that a further influx of I.W.W. into Canada is proposed, with a view to the destruction by fire of Prairie Crops [sic]."⁴⁶ In contrast, four months earlier the Provincial Police reported that "with the exception of an individual member who happens to stray across the border this Organization [sic] appears to be unknown in Saskatchewan."⁴⁷

While the IWW remained difficult to pin down, the fact that there were organizers in the province attempting to work with unhappy

unionists increased the suspicions of public officials that a conspiracy was afoot. For example, C.A. Dunning, the then minister of telephones in Saskatchewan government, blamed a strike of telephone workers which began late in October, 1918, on a "Bolshevik agitator"⁴⁸ while in reality the man was merely a representative of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. Yet, the fear of "Red" intervention in and the take over of union affairs as a reaction to the more radical response of their members was real, although it did not reach a fever pitch until after the Armistice.

Still others in government and military circles felt that the press and its constant emphasis on sensationalism was in part to blame for labour's unrest. As one high-ranking officer stated, "I would earnestly suggest...that the papers refrain from publishing too much information about the strikes from a purely patriotic point of view and let the labor situation die a natural death, as it is undoubtedly a fact that the trouble is very much accentuated by their articles."⁴⁹ The same sentiment was echoed by Arthur Meighen when he told Borden that "...it occurs to me that the reckless conduct of newspapers in inflaming public opinion against Government policies...is a prolific source of Bolshevistic tendencies."⁵⁰

To counter the problem of the press, the Chief Press Censor for Canada, working through the Department of the Secretary of State, made a conscious attempt to place embargoes on news emanating from places where labour was particularly restive.⁵¹ In addition, he, through his district agents, kept a close watch on all the press, and in cases where inflammatory statements were made, an investigation was carried out, with the RNWMP examining the personal life of the editor or

writer, and the Censor himself bringing the inflammatory statement to the attention of the editor.⁵² The authority for such action came from an ever increasing number of Orders-in-Council intended to protect the war effort by preserving morale. Such an Order was the one of April 16, 1918, which declared "it an offence to print, publish, or publicly express seditious and anti-war opinions." This one was especially hard on such organizations as the Socialist Party of Canada, a radical group whose ideals and aspirations were becoming increasingly attractive to Western Canadian unionists as the war dragged on. Thus, the SPC complained that some of its mail bore signs of having been tampered with and in some cases even confiscated.⁵³

Of more immediate importance to the war effort was the Borden Government's attempt to curb the dislocation of industry by the increasing number of disputes. Through four Orders-in-Council in a three month period in mid-1918 the government's attitude toward industrial relations was established. P.C. 1743 of July 11 was a declaration of a war labour policy which recognized non-closed shop collective bargaining, granted a living wage to vary with the cost of living, and equal pay for women for equal work. But because the emphasis was to be on maximum production, disputes would be settled through channels provided by the Industrial Disputes Investigation Act and a board of appeal, the findings of which would be binding.⁵⁴ Eight days later P.C. 1832 decreed that prosecutions of violations of the IDIA were to be undertaken, while P.C. 2299 of September 19 gave the RNWMP responsibility for prosecuting violations of the IDIA as referred to in P.C. 1832.⁵⁵ The final blow was P.C. 2525 of October 11, which took away the right to strike in certain industries. If violated, the Order provided for fines not exceeding

\$1,000 or a maximum six month prison term. Furthermore, any violator of military age would "ipso facto be deemed to be a soldier enlisted in the military forces of Canada and subject to military law for the duration of the present war and of demobilization thereafter and shall forfeit any exemption granted to him and any right to apply for or obtain any exemption from military service under the Military Service Act."⁵⁶

Western reaction was immediate. Affiliates of the Winnipeg Trades and Labor Council threatened a general strike if the Order was implemented, while at the same time calling for unity among Canadian labour to oppose the Order.⁵⁷ The increasingly radical executive of the Regina council called for a strike vote if P.C. 2525 was implemented. Although the vote was never taken, the expression of intention demonstrated the concern. Within a month of the proclamation of P.C. 2525 the war was over and the Order was rescinded. But it was too late. Too much had happened and too much mutual suspicion had been engendered. The real passion felt by labour was perhaps best expressed by the radical Joseph Sambrook, secretary of the Regina Council, in an appeal to all locals regarding P.C. 2525:

Bros:- I wish to appeal to you through the Regina T. & L. Council and ask you if this is the way for those to whom we vested the power; to deal with us; it as [sic] been proved time and time again that the worker as [sic] nobly borne without flinching his share of the burden entailed through the present war; and it is only through the ever increasing cost of living that the worker has had to resort to his last hope the Strike; I venture to say that if the Government had only have seen to it that the profiteering that as [sic] been so apparent to all, had been stopped, there would not have been the unrest throughout the Dominion that there is at the present time.⁵⁸

The Armistice changed nothing but the emergency nature of the situation. In fact, in the long run, the end of the war made the

crisis situation worse. The Government did not respond immediately when the TLC Executive Council urged it "to restore the status quo ante bellum immediately as far as Orders-in Council was [sic] concerned."⁵⁹ More important from labour's view was that the Government had few reconstruction plans. The cost of living did not decrease appreciably even though unemployment increased substantially during the winter of 1918-19. In Saskatchewan, between twenty-five and thirty thousand had gone overseas, and by May, 1919, ten to twelve thousand had returned.⁶⁰ This fact only compounded a problem which had existed throughout the war.⁶¹ Further, the housing situation, which had become critical with the lack of funds for new housing starts during the war, was only made more difficult by the return of the soldiers.⁶²

In an attempt to discover what precisely was wrong in the industrial world of post-war Canada, the Borden Government created the Royal Commission on Industrial Relations early in 1919. As part of its nation-wide itinerary, it sat in Saskatoon on May 7, Regina on May 8, and Moose Jaw on May 9. While these were not the most pivotal stops, the evidence presented to the Commission in the Saskatchewan centres is very revealing. On the one hand it demonstrated that the problems on the labour scene in the "Wheat Province" were part of a larger malaise; but on the other hand much evidence was presented to show that part of the problem could be blamed on local conditions.

As in other urban centres, many of the witnesses called stressed that wages had not kept up with the high cost of living. Others dwelt on housing and the fact that the dwellings that were available were inadequate and expensive solely because the property owners had contracted for high mortgages during the pre-war boom period. At that time,

houses were built where there were no sewage facilities, and with the coming of war the city administrators could not borrow sufficient capital to provide the necessary services.⁶³ Unemployment also came up for discussion before the Commission, although its extent varied from area to area. But more than in any other area on the prairies, unemployment was a seasonal problem as the effective working season for most trades was only seven months.

There were grievances expressed that were of a less immediate nature, but these nevertheless ate away at the workers' souls. The suppression of free speech, thought, and liberties, together with the profiteering in munitions were after-tastes of the war, but they were eminently important because they corroded any confidence that labour had in constituted authority. While there was little overt industrial unrest, the consensus was that there was definitely something wrong. While, according to one witness in Saskatoon, prior to the war socialist thought was considered as "bunk", the workers were now starting to listen.⁶⁴ Therefore, most of those from labour's ranks who spoke to the Commission expressed themselves "in favor of an entire industrial reconstruction, substituting production for use versus profit."⁶⁵ But economic need was not the sole motivating force. Workers were becoming educated, and thus could see the gross inequalities perpetrated during the war, a war which avowedly had been waged for the benefit of mankind, with the post-war period only bringing more of the same.

The sentiments in favour of a reconstruction of society were expressed before the Commission by the conservatives of the movement, such as James Somerville, the representative of the International Association of Machinists, who made his home in Moose Jaw.⁶⁶ Thus,

the radicals, such as Joseph Sambrook, speaking on behalf of the Regina Trades and Labor Council represented an even more extreme position when he advocated the Russian Soviet platform to the Commission.⁶⁷

But while Somerville and the moderates offered sane answers to real problems, the situation by the time the Commission sat in Saskatchewan was almost out of their hands, at least for a time. The Sambrooks held sway and it was their position that gained the most publicity from the local press.⁶⁸ While the statements made by such men as Sambrook were radical and thus sensational, they only tended to increase the suspicion by the public and the government that there were nasty things going on that would in the end jeopardize the existing system. In fact, the government was taking no chances. There were rumours of pending revolutions in Europe and of two million rubles in foreign money were available for "Communistic sections" in a number of Canadian cities, including Regina.⁶⁹ Where such activity could be found, an immediate system of infiltration and surveillance was established by the RNWMP. The federal police also made an intensive check of quantities of arms, ammunition and explosives in Western Canada early in 1919 for the Department of Militia and Defense.⁷⁰

One reason that the voices of the moderates within the labour movement were not being heard was that they still identified with international craft union organizations, and the conservatism and inaction that these represented. The TLC, the AFL and the international unions had gradually fallen out of favour with many Western unionists as the war dragged on. But they made one last-ditch attempt to overcome the disadvantages of geography and wealth and sent a full complement

of delegates to the October, 1918, Convention of the TLC held in Quebec City. They came armed with resolutions for a post-war industrial world which included a six-hour day, five-day week and the reorganization of the Canadian labour movement along industrial lines so as to provide the benefits of organization to the unskilled and semi-skilled. But they lost. At this point the westerners held a separate caucus and agreed to meet again to form a separate organization.

The Interprovincial Labour Convention of western Canadian unions which was held in Calgary in mid-March, 1919, marked the crystallization of a number of trends begun in the months immediately prior to it. Its deliberations marked the beginning of a new order for labour's radicals. It was the culmination of four years of frustration with the established order and institutions. It demonstrated the breadth of the geographic and ideological schism in Canadian labour that created a short-lived separatist movement. The statements made by the convention delegates greatly increased the fear of radicalism in the public at large, and caused public authorities to step up their infiltration of labour organizations and the careful scrutiny of the individuals involved. The detailed reports of the infiltrators augmented the fears of a genuine "Red" threat to Canadian institutions in the minds of high ranking public officials. These trepidations, in part justified, led the federal government to take a particular line of action in regard to later events.

As far as Saskatchewan's delegation to the Calgary convention was concerned, it was rather small and relatively quiet, indicating the minor position that Saskatchewan labour held, even among western Canadian unionists. Seventeen men went to Calgary and between them they presented

ten insignificant resolutions, most of which were passed by the Convention with a minimum of discussion.⁷¹ Most of the Saskatchewan delegates stood on the left of the movement, and the most radical of these, Regina's Joe Sambrook, was elected to the policy committee which was to discuss the formation of one big industrial union. In all probability, Sambrook's election was an attempt to give some geographic representation to Saskatchewan. Meanwhile, Ralph Heseltine, also from Regina, failed in his attempt at a position on the central committee. But radical as these men were, they remained generally silent, and only the veteran unionist from Moose Jaw, James Somerville, a recognized conservative and protector of the international concept of unionism, interjected a word of caution when he said that "it is a serious proposition if we attempt to inaugurate this movement without the great majority [of the craft unions] in support, it is going to be in the same place as the time the children of Israel wanted to go to the flesh pots rather than face the music."⁷²

Words of caution fell on deaf ears. The convention was dominated by such men as Joseph Knight of Edmonton, Jack Kavanagh, Victor Midgley, and Bill Pritchard of Vancouver, and R.J. Johns and Bob Russell, all members of the SPC and all viewing the occasion as opportune for a new departure for organized labour. The RNWMP officers who infiltrated the convention were correct in assessing these men as "intelligent, well read men, and...close students of economic and social literature" and that they were "able speakers, forceful and clear." However, the judgement that these men were "fanatics" and that "the motive for this assembly was to try if possible, to seize the present chaotic conditions resulting from the war to weld together the different bodies of labor in a common

effort to overthrow the present social order and instal [sic] a Bolsheviki regime" is still open to dispute.⁷³ But the important thing is that some members of the Government at least, together with the military, believed that "the purpose of these agitators is so to inflame labour as to cause it to attempt to subvert the present system of government and to establish 'the dictatorship of the proletariat'."⁷⁴ With the currency of such beliefs, especially in the light of similar sentiments below the border, it is not surprising that some time after the Calgary convention the authorities began to take a particular interest in Saskatchewan labour as well. While the scrutiny was probably general, detailed documentation only exists for Regina, where two RNWMP officers infiltrated labour's ranks and proceeded to send back daily reports to their superiors on the activities of most of Regina's labour leaders at the time. At the same time, they attempted to find sufficient evidence to eventually prosecute some of the leaders for uttering unpatriotic remarks or distributing banned literature. It appears that Constable T.E. Ryan, masquerading as a disgruntled unemployed returned soldier named Kelley, and Sergeant Leopold, working under the name of J.W. Esselwein, an immigrant painter and decorator, had little trouble getting the confidence of Regina's leftists. While they discovered some true revolutionaries who viewed the situation in 1919 as the coming of the revolution, they must have been disappointed with organized labour.⁷⁵ They witnessed some frenzied activity and some inflammatory rhetoric from some of the labour leaders, especially with the advent of the Winnipeg General Strike, but when it came to actually walking out en masse with his Winnipeg brothers, the Saskatchewan unionist demonstrated that he was more blue than red.

Between the Calgary Conference and May 15, the day the Winnipeg General Strike began, the labour situation in Saskatchewan varied from city to city. The officer commanding the police detachment in Prince Albert reported that nothing serious was going on in mid-April and that "no anarchical or socialistic disturbances have taken place." He concluded, "I do not think there are any sinister agencies at work."⁷⁶ There is no information on the Moose Jaw and Saskatoon situations but two weeks earlier, the officer in the same position in Regina had reported that

there is considerable unrest evident in labour organizations--more especially the Railway Mail Clerks Union and Building Trades Union. Anarchy or Bolshevism is being discussed and there are some hot-heads who wish to make trouble. It is to be hoped that the saner element will remain in control and that the conditions will become normal this coming summer.⁷⁷

The reasons for discontent were obvious. In addition to the numerous irritants accumulated over the previous few years, Regina's building trades unions, still involved with the dominant industry, were again at loggerheads with the local Builders' Exchange. In March, 1919, all the unions involved with the construction industry had submitted a schedule calling for an across-the-board increase of fifteen cents per hour for all trades. Their argument was that wages during the war had not kept up with the increased cost of living.⁷⁸ The situation that developed during the following weeks became extremely confusing. There were proposals and counterproposals. Some unions finally settled on their own and then refused to go to work for other reasons. Still others settled with the individual contractors without consulting either the Exchange or the Building Trades Council.⁷⁹ But by the beginning of May all the unions but the Carpenters and Joiners had gone to work.

The carpenters' reason was that they had been locked out by the Exchange on April 28. It was at this point that the Trades and Labor Council, now definitely dominated by the radicals, took the initiative. There was talk of a general strike and on May 12 motions recommending a strike referendum and establishing a strike committee were passed.⁸⁰ In the next few days Ralph Heseltine interviewed all union secretaries on the matter, with some success. The returns from the referendum which came in on the 16th and 17th indicated overwhelming support from all unions except the Railway Clerks and Railway Carmen.⁸¹ Strike machinery was established by the Council, but in the meantime the Carpenters' union reached a settlement. Yet, the Council decided to continue with its plans for the creation of general strike machinery "in the event of one ever being needed." All affiliates were given representation on the strike committee so as "to formulate a system whereby in the event of the necessity of a general strike we shall have certain well defined plans that will allow of us being assured of success."⁸²

These contingency plans were based on the fact that Winnipeg labour had walked out some days earlier and an appeal for a sympathetic strike had gone out to all cities. But the initial enthusiasm was lacking. Several executive meetings of the Council were held to map out strategy, part of which included the calling of mass meetings to arouse support for their Winnipeg brethren. On 26 May two Winnipeg Postal Employees spoke to a packed meeting of Council giving as the reason that other cities should support the strike in Winnipeg that

if the Winnipeg strike fails the cause of organized labor in Western Canada is dead for years to come. It is for this reason that the cause of the Winnipeg workers is the cause of the workers of Western Canada. Winnipeg is the main labor centre of the west, and it is essential that Labor's cause there shall not fail.⁸³

An even larger rally was held the next day in the Labor Temple. This time the star performer was a Winnipeg machinist and he was followed to the platform by most of Regina's labour leaders who convinced the assembled throng to back Winnipeg to the limit.⁸⁴ But only the true believers must have been in attendance at the May 27 meeting, because although it was estimated that the majority in favour of a sympathetic strike was two to one, by the end of the month eleven of the twenty-five affiliates of the Council had expressed approval while five were definitely against and nine were undecided.⁸⁵

Even though Sambrook had written to all affiliated locals on the 28th that the Regina Council was "in full accord with the aims and objects of the Winniepeg [sic] workers, and that we immediately set the machinery in operation to bring to a successfull [sic] issue a sympathetic strike in the city of Regina...."⁸⁶ the radicals were rapidly losing their grip on the Council. There were some suggestions that Heseltine resign as president.⁸⁷ Sensing this, the strike committee decided to withhold action until June 2, a mass meeting called for the 29th was cancelled and those unions that had already voted were given a chance to reconsider.⁸⁸ At the in camera meeting on the 2nd the Council washed its hands of the whole affair with the resolution that "this Council having provided for the taking of a strike vote of all affiliated Unions do now withdraw from action therewith; and that the [strike] committee be discharged and all information re the sympathetic strike be handed to the Unions interested."⁸⁹

Despite the Council's dissociation from the idea of a sympathetic strike with Winnipeg, a renegade group with D.J. McDonald as its spokesman formed a provisional strike committee, and under its auspices

a number of men--less than 200--made up primarily of electricians, CNR shopmen and building labourers walked out on June 3rd, most without the sanction of their respective unions.⁹⁰ Most of these, however, straggled back to work within the next few days and Regina labour's attempt to fight shoulder to shoulder with the strikers in Winnipeg ended with substantially less gusto than it had begun.

Events in Moose Jaw followed similar lines as those in Regina. A general strike in sympathy with Winnipeg seemed inevitable by the end of May, according to press sources,⁹¹ but when returns from a strike referendum were received by the Trades and Labor Council, the prognostications seemed less than accurate. Of Moose Jaw's 2,200 unionists, only 524 from fifteen affiliates agreed on strike action, and of the latter, a large minority coupled their acceptance with various conditions. Only the civic employees, the fire-fighters and those employed in the locomotive shops expressed unqualified support.⁹²

As in the capital city, the situation revolved around the moderates trying to keep control of the Trades and Labor Council out of the hands of the radicals. The latter group, described by an infiltrating police officer as "the most radical element I have ever seen in Moose Jaw", entertained the usual group of striking confreres from other centres as moral examples, called rallies in their honour, threatened public authorities with extreme action if collective bargaining was not granted in Winnipeg, and made political hay when their telegrams were not answered.⁹³ But their efforts paid few dividends. The moderate faction led by W.G. Baker, organizer for the Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen (a union not even affiliated with the Trades and Labor Council), managed to dissipate the enthusiasm of the radicals by shifting the

responsibility for strike action to the local unions⁹⁴ and by getting the Council to agree to a fact-finding mission of seven unionists to be sent to Winnipeg.⁹⁵ Some sheet metal workers, tinsmiths, and street railway workers did walk out, but the issues here seem to have been higher wages and shorter hours rather than sympathy with Winnipeg.⁹⁶

In contrast to the cities to the south, Saskatoon's unionists felt rather more sympathetic toward the Winnipeg strikers, if their actions meant anything. Within a week of the appeal from Winnipeg, a Central Strike Committee was formed under the auspices of the Trades Council, stationery was printed, the decision was made to take a strike vote, and a meeting called to assess the result. Eleven local unions indicated a willingness to strike and proceeded to do so on the 28th of May. But to maintain some public sympathy, the Strike Committee ordered the teamsters to continue to deliver water to outlying sections of the city. Also, the musicians, motion picture operators, and stage hands were requested "to take up their work of keeping the people cheerful."⁹⁷

By the evening of the 29th the Saskatoon strike was almost general, except for a few unions concentrated in the printing trades, together with the civic employees. However, there was little complaint about the withdrawal of services throughout the city, except from the business community, which expressed irritation at the withdrawal of mail service. There was even talk of strike-breakers being brought in,⁹⁸ but this proved unnecessary, because on the 29th an ultimatum came from Ottawa stating that if the postal employees did not return within twenty-four hours they would be fired.⁹⁹ Thirty-one of the 100 inside workers heeded the ultimatum.¹⁰⁰

But while the fate of the postal employees hung on the whim of

the Postmaster General, the Saskatoon citizenry and some unionists waited for the return of a fact-finding mission of "interested citizens" sponsored by City Council to find out "the true facts in relation to the strike of employees in Winnipeg."¹⁰¹ The Trades Council had been invited to send along a delegate but it refused, calling it a "Joy Ride" designed "to gain time for the City for the ostensible reason of finding out, what we already knew, through Brother Collins [one of the itinerant Winnipeg strikers]...."¹⁰² But with the return of the delegation the radical Strike Committee began to lose its grip on the city's unionists. The report of the mission reached the same conclusion as had the Minister of Labour, Gideon Robertson, whom they had interviewed:

...events have proved conclusively that the motive behind the general strike effort was for the purpose of gaining control of and direction of industrial affairs; also municipal, provincial and federal activities...., and with the avowed intention of extending that control to a wider field.¹⁰³

In response to the conclusions reached by the delegation, the Strike Committee attempted to persuade those unions maintaining essential services to walk out¹⁰⁴ but their success was limited. The Committee realized that it had failed when groups of workers began to return to work without its permission. Finally, it ordered the remaining unions back to work on June 7th and 10th and ceased to exist soon after.¹⁰⁵

Outside of the three main cities of Regina, Moose Jaw and Saskatoon there was scattered strike activity in sympathy with Winnipeg in a number of small railway towns throughout the province. Prince Albert, the largest of these, almost had a general strike but for the ITU local, which refused to follow suit. The railway workers struck for varying lengths of time in Sutherland, Biggar, Humboldt and Battle-

ford, but the inconvenience suffered was minor and the work stoppage was probably viewed by most of the men as a holiday of sorts.¹⁰⁶

In general terms, the response of unionists in Saskatchewan's cities and towns to the plea for support from Winnipeg was less than effective. The stimuli for strike action were the same, but the reaction was half-hearted. In all three of the major centres the radical element gained the ascendancy in the initial flush of enthusiasm, but when the possible consequences were assessed, the rank-and-file responded to the appeal of "saner", more conservative minds. In part, the fact that the appeal for sympathy came from far away Winnipeg must have influenced some minds. The enthusiasm displayed in Regina in early May over the carpenters' plight demonstrates this fact. The fear of reprisals by public authorities, as with the Saskatoon postal workers, must have made some more wary. But most important was the nature of the organized labour movement in the province within their respective communities. The organized sector of the work force was definitely in a small minority, and thus had to behave itself. But more than this, even those workers who were organized could not present a united front in most instances. Therefore, they could hardly establish a united front with workers in the other small centres scattered throughout the province. The task was further complicated by poor communications caused by the withdrawal of the telegraphers' services in some centres. All the men had to rely on was the local press, which was censored so as not to inflame passions, and the roving strikers from Winnipeg, whose accounts were prejudiced in the other direction. With such contradictions in information, rumours must have run rampant through the community, and Saskatchewan's rank-and-file unionists,

although in agreement with the principle of collective bargaining seemingly at stake in Winnipeg, were also members of the community and thus adhered to the prevailing opinions.

There is no doubt that the belief that was increasingly prevalent in the community was that there was a "Red" conspiracy by foreign agitators to usurp constituted authority with possible dire consequences. There were reports of IWW men burning elevators in Leader, Saskatchewan, and causing a train wreck at Swift Current.¹⁰⁷ Army authorities were concerned with the maintenance of communications with Regina, the headquarters of Military District No. 12, as well as the headquarters of the Mounted Police and the seat of the provincial government, because "it is conceivable that strikers may cut the telegraph wires...."¹⁰⁸ In fact, "all reliable personnel of the Canadian Cavalry Brigade who are willing to remain on duty to uphold constitutional authority and safeguard life and property" were to "proceed to district headquarters where unwilling personnel will be discharged forthwith."¹⁰⁹

The federal cabinet also believed that "there is a revolutionary section in the labour movement which is repudiating the leadership of the experienced and trusted leaders of labour, and may by its actions precipitate serious trouble." Thus, to aid "in maintaining law and order, and protecting the lives and property of citizens from mob and revolutionary violence" the Government offered the Saskatchewan government the services of the military and the RNWMP.¹¹⁰

The press echoed the fear of a threat to the public weal. The Morning Leader declared that

...they [the Winnipeg strikers] opposed all bargaining, and are out to destroy the whole industrial, financial and governmental institutions of Canada, including the present system of labor

unions and to establish a system, or rather lack of system, which prevails in Bolshevist Russia today.

The sympathetic strike is being called in Regina to express approval of and give support to this program of the Reds who, unfortunately, have secured the upper hand in Winnipeg labor circles.¹¹¹

Speaking for the citizens at large, Regina's leading daily intimated that reciprocal action would be forthcoming.

No usurpation of the rights and powers of civic government will be tolerated in Regina. There will be no recognition of "permits" from any strike committee to do business in this city. There will be nothing even resembling a soviet created here. Law and order will be maintained and, the strikers to contrary notwithstanding, the business of the community will go on.¹¹²

In a similar vein Moose Jaw's Daily News stated: "To tie up a country's industries by means of sympathetic strikes is simply the worst kind of autocracy, and certainly will never be tolerated in any British community, while there are any citizens who can drive a nail or wield a spade."¹¹³

The "Red Scare" notwithstanding, the general public was being inconvenienced by the scattered walkouts in Saskatchewan cities, and by the work stoppage in Winnipeg. Mail service was curtailed temporarily in Saskatoon and public transportation had come to a stop. Some towns began to feel the shortage of essentials such as sugar and flour. The expansion of labour unrest to the Drumheller coal district cut off the supply to the Saskatoon power house and pumping station,¹¹⁴ causing inevitable widespread concern.

Partly out of fear, and partly to cushion the impact of the withdrawal of essential services, other sectors of the community threatened action. The fact-finding mission sponsored by Saskatoon City Council was such an effort. In Regina, very early in the affair the Rotarians volunteered to carry on "business as usual" in the event of a termination of services.¹¹⁵ Soon after, on May 28, a group composed primarily of the

city's business and professional community met to form a citizens' committee of 350 patterned after, and with the same objectives as, the infamous Committee of 1000 in Winnipeg.¹¹⁶ On the same day Moose Jaw City Council created an emergency committee with the expressed intention of co-ordinating the operation of the city's utilities, had its operators voted to strike.¹¹⁷

With such determination expressed by the more influential business community and by elected officials, the moderates within labour had an easier time convincing their associates of the error of their ways. Yet, other centres, and especially Winnipeg, had similar opposition, and labour managed to put up a better fight. Thus, in the final analysis, the moderation demonstrated by Saskatchewan labour was the result of its weakness and lack of unity. Small in numbers, lacking real status in the community, divided among themselves and among the various other small urban centres, and lacking correct information on events elsewhere, organized labour in the province reacted to stresses and problems in a manner which was to be repeated on numerous occasions. Its economic and social vulnerability was a consistent plague on its house, never allowing it true self-expression.

FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER II

¹Bureau of Labour Report, 1914, p.8.

²See PAC, Immigration Branch files, RG 76, Acc. 70/65, file 852348 and Acc. 69/17, box 150, file 195281 #3. See also infra, chapter IX for a more detailed treatment of this problem.

³Laurier Papers 190633-4 and 190635, R.C.B. Mundy (Moose Jaw Mayor) to Laurier, telegram and letter, Feb. 20, 1914.

⁴Ibid., 190646-8, T.M. Molloy to Laurier, March 4, 1914.

⁵Bureau of Labour Report, 1914, p.8.

⁶Ibid., p. 29.

⁷The Labour Gazette, Dec., 1914, pp. 669-70.

⁸RLO, 1915, pp. 223-6.

⁹RT&LC files, MJT&LC resolution, n.d.

¹⁰Ibid., telegram MJT&LC to Asquith, May 2, 1915.

¹¹Bureau of Labour Reports, 1914, p. 8, 1918, p. 15, and 1919, p. 15.

¹²Regina District Council of Carpenters and Joiners Minutes, April 17, 1918 meeting.

¹³Saskatoon Typographical Union No. 663 Minutes, Aug. 7, 1915 meeting.

¹⁴RT&LC files, R.A. Rigg (secty Wpg. T&LC) to all trades and labour councils, Dec. 24, 1915.

¹⁵Canadian Annual Review, (hereafter C.A.R.) 1915, p. 430.

¹⁶C.A.R., 1916, p. 430.

¹⁷Ibid., 1917, p. 325.

¹⁸The Morning Leader, Jan. 3, 1917; RT&LC files, TLC president to all affiliated bodies, Dec. 28, 1916.

¹⁹RT&LC files, J.E. Young (Calgary T&LC secty) to RT&LC, Jan. 6, 1917.

²⁰The Morning Leader, Jan. 4, 1917.

²¹RT&LC files, W. Snelgrove (ST&LC secty) to RT&LC, Jan. 15, 1917.

²²The Morning Leader, Jan. 2, 1917.

²³Ibid., Dec. 26, 1916.

²⁴Regina Post, January 4, 1917; The Morning Leader, Jan. 4, 1917 and RT&LC files.

²⁵Laurier's reply was non-committal while Bennett verbally chastised Regina's working people for daring to defy the law. RT&LC files.

²⁶Ibid., Correspondence between Smith Eddy and Martin, Jan. 27, Feb. 1, and Feb. 2, 1917; The Morning Leader, Jan. 30, 1917.

²⁷C.A.R., 1917, pp. 418-19.

²⁸The Morning Leader, May 23, 1917.

²⁹Ibid., June 1, 1917.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹RT&LC files, J. Sambrook to E. Robinson, April 18, 1918.

³²C.A.R., 1917, p. 422.

³³Report, Western Labour Conference, March 16-18, 1919, Winnipeg Tribune, April 5, 1919.

³⁴RT&LC files, George Keen to RT&LC, Aug. 13, 1915.

³⁵RT&LC Minutes, Nov. 13, 1916 meeting.

³⁶Ibid., Sept. 11, Sept. 25 and Oct. 23, 1916 meetings.

³⁷The Voice, April 23, 1915.

³⁸RT&LC files, RT&LC to Martin, March 30, 1918 and ST&LC to Borden, Jan. 13, 1915.

³⁹The question of labour's participation in Saskatchewan's politics at all levels will be discussed in depth in Chapter VII.

⁴⁰Borden Papers, 540377, Minutes of Conference on Labour's Position on War Problems.

⁴¹RT&LC files, J. Sambrook to P.M. Draper, Sept. 7, 1918.

⁴²C.A.R., 1918, p. 330.

⁴³Bureau of Labour Report, 1919, pp. 22-3.

⁴⁴Borden Papers, 54176, G.D. Robertson to N.W. Rowell (pres. Privy Council) April 23, 1918, and 54177, Robertson to Borden, May 3, 1918.

⁴⁵Ibid., file 515, Commissioner of Police to Minister of Justice, March 5, 1918.

⁴⁶DND files, RG 24-A, Vol. 2553, file C-2102), Major A.E. Inkes (D.I.O.M.D. No. 11) to Assistant Director of Military Intelligence, Dept. of Militia and Defence, Aug. 17, 1918.

⁴⁷Borden Papers, file 515, Chief Commissioner of Police to Minister of Justice, May 23, 1918.

⁴⁸The Daily Post, Oct. 23, 1918.

⁴⁹Secretary of State files, RG 6, E 1, Vol. 156, file 170, Col. Godson Godson to Chief of General Staff, July 26, 1918.

⁵⁰Borden Papers, file 559, Meighen to Borden, Dec. 18, 1919.

⁵¹Secretary of State files RG 6, E1, Vol. 111, file 276-4, Ernest J. Chambers (Chief Press Censor) to J. Fred B. Livesay (Press Censor for the West), Jan. 4, 1917.

⁵²See Ibid., Vol. 119, file 279-17 on the Estevan Mercury in 1917.

⁵³RT&LC files, C. Stephenson to RT&LC, Jan. 1, 1919.

⁵⁴The Labour Gazette, Aug. 1918, pp. 616-8.

⁵⁵Borden Papers, 54286.

⁵⁶The Labour Gazette, Nov. 1918, pp. 983-4.

⁵⁷RT&LC files, E. Robinson to RT&LC, Oct. 28, 1918.

⁵⁸RT&LC files, RT&LC to all affiliated locals, Oct. 30, 1918.

⁵⁹TLC Executive Board Minutes, Nov. 27, 1918 meeting.

⁶⁰Royal Commission on Industrial Relations, 1919, Minutes of Proceedings, T.M. Molloy testimony, p. 202.

⁶¹See Ibid., pp. 1052, 1126, 1136, 1138, 1176.

⁶²Ibid., pp. 1250-1.

⁶³Ibid., pp. 1250-1.

⁶⁴Ibid., pp. 1059-60.

⁶⁵Ibid., pp. 1037-8.

⁶⁶See Ibid., pp. 1330ff.

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 1139.

⁶⁸See The Morning Leader, May 9, 1919 for coverage of the Commission hearings in Regina.

⁶⁹Borden Papers, file 559, Milner to Borden, July 23, 1919.

⁷⁰RCMP Papers, RNWMP Letter Book, R.G. 18, A-2, V-137, p. 47 and p. 169, A.A. McLean to Deputy Minister of Labour, March 6, 1919 and McLean to Lt. Col. F.E. Davis (Assistant Director of Military Intelligence, Dept. of Militia and Defense), March 31, 1919.

⁷¹See The Winnipeg Tribune, April 5, 1919 for a verbatim report of the Convention.

⁷²Ibid., p. 8.

⁷³Borden Papers, file 515, A. Bowen Perry (RNWMP Commissioner) to the Comptroller, RNWMP, April 2, 1919 and Calgary Sub-station report Re: Interprovincial Labor Convention, March 19, 1919.

⁷⁴Dept. of National Defense files, RG 24, C, Vol. 407 NSC 1055-2-21 Vol. 1 "Secret Memorandum on Revolutionary Tendencies in Western Canada." n.d.

⁷⁵RCMP files, RG 18, B-5, Vol. 60.

⁷⁶Ibid., RNWMP Letter Book, RG 18, A-2, Vol. 137, p. 360, A.A. McLean to Deputy Minister of Labour April 15, 1919.

⁷⁷Ibid., p. 182, McLean to Deputy Minister of Labour, April 1, 1919.

⁷⁸The Morning Leader, March 24, 1919.

⁷⁹Ibid., April 1, 1919.

⁸⁰RT&LC Minutes, April 28 and May 12, 1919 meetings.

⁸¹RT&LC files, Strike Committee report, May 17, 1919 and individual returns.

⁸²Ibid., Executive report, May 26, 1919.

⁸³The Morning Leader, May 27, 1919.

⁸⁴Ibid., May 28, 1919.

⁸⁵Ibid., May 30, 1919.

⁸⁶RT&LC files, Sambrook to all affiliates, May 28, 1919.

⁸⁷The Morning Leader, June 2, 1919.

⁸⁸RT&LC minutes, May 28, 1919 meeting.

⁸⁹Ibid., June 2, 1919 meeting.

⁹⁰The Morning Leader, June 3, 1919; Borden Papers, file 564, Report on Labour Situation in Western Canada, June 5 and 6.

⁹¹The Morning Leader, May 30, 1919.

⁹²Ibid., and June 6; Borden Papers, file 564, Segeant W. Bairn to RNWMP Assistant Commissioner Routledge, June 5, 1919.

⁹³Borden Papers, file 564, RNWMP CIB Office Report, June 5, 1919; Report on Labour Situation, June 8; telegram T. Wright to Borden, June 3, 1919.

⁹⁴Ibid., CIB report, June 5, 1919.

⁹⁵Morning Leader, May 31, 1919; The Daily News (M.J.), May 30, 1919.

⁹⁶The Morning Leader, June 3, 1919 and Borden Papers, file 564, Report on Labour Situation, June 8.

⁹⁷RT&LC files, W. Mill (Strike Committee Secretary) to RT&LC, May 30, 1919.

⁹⁸The Morning Leader, May 30, 1919.

⁹⁹P.E. Blondin (PMG) to H.T. Bushby, May 29, 1919, reprinted in Ibid.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., May 31, 1919. See also Post Office Files, RG 3-9, Vol. 95, A.M. Isbister (Saskatoon Postmaster) to PMG, June 6 and 12, 1919 for lists of post office employees who went out, those who returned and those who refused to return.

¹⁰¹The Morning Leader, June 3, 1919.

¹⁰²RT&LC files, W. Mill to RT&LC, May 30, 1919.

¹⁰³The Morning Leader, June 3, 1919.

¹⁰⁴Ibid.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., June 9 and 11, 1919.

¹⁰⁶See Borden Papers, file 564, Reports on Labour Situation, June 5 and 6 and June 8.

¹⁰⁷The Morning Leader, May 23 and 30, 1919.

¹⁰⁸(DND-RCN files, RG 24 C, Vol. 407, file NSC 1035-2-22 V. 1.) Maj.-Gen. W. Gwatkin to the Naval Secretary, June 6, 1919.

¹⁰⁹Ibid., May 25, 1919.

¹¹⁰RCMP files RG 18, A-5, Vol. 1, N.W. Rowell to W.F.A. Turgeon (Sask. Attorney-General), May 16, 1919. Part of Turgeon's reply on May 20 read: "In this almost purely agricultural Province where our centres of population are few and comparatively small there must, of course, be much less apprehension than in other parts of Canada."

¹¹¹May 30, 1919.

¹¹²May 27, 1919.

¹¹³Borden Papers, File 563, Report from Dept. of Public Information on Labour Situation, June 4, 1919.

¹¹⁴Ibid., file 564, F.R. MacMillan (S'toon Mayor) to Borden, May 30, 1919.

¹¹⁵The Morning Leader, May 28, 1919.

¹¹⁶Ibid., May 29, 1919.

¹¹⁷The Daily News, May 29, 1919.

CHAPTER III

THERMIDOR: 1919-1929

In May, 1919, Winnipeg unionists had asked for sympathetic strikes in all major cities in Western Canada as an extension of their general strike to place pressure on public authorities to speed up a satisfactory settlement. The response in Saskatchewan cities proved to be far from aggressive. But for some of the radical leaders in that province, the motivation for untested solutions to contemporary problems still existed. Embittered by the myopia of most of their former colleagues, they pursued the cause of the One Big Union with a vengeance. Hence, the new movement achieved some brief success in certain centres, but when its impetus was lost, it declined rapidly.

The reasons for the rapid demise of the OBU in Saskatchewan were in part the same as those which caused the failure of the general sympathetic strike. More important, however, was the fact that the system advocated by the proponents of the One Big Union did not fit the economic, geographic and social realities of organized labour in the province. During its brief ascendancy, however, it did force the established eastern and international organizations to sit up and pay some attention to the previously neglected West. But when the threat of dual unionism ceased, so did the attention. While it lasted, however, Saskatchewan's unionists welcomed it, especially in financial terms, because they faced a severe urban recession

which lasted until 1924, and which did little to enhance militancy.

The remainder of the decade was characterized by prosperity, not only for the province but for the whole of North America. But unlike previous periods of affluence, which were good for the growth of the trade union movement, the hectic pace established during the last half of the decade created a particularly rapacious ethos with independence as its by-product. Trade union organizations, predicated on the principles of co-operation and unity, languished. Membership declined in the face of widespread apathy and opposition from management. Those who remained true to the movement, by chance or desire, concerned themselves with petty struggles for power within their parochial strongholds. Yet their efforts in the name of fraternity only weakened further a vulnerable movement, leaving very little of substance to face the buffetting of the next decade. Yet, generally speaking, the whole span of the 'twenties presented a placid picture in comparison with the rhetoric, bravado and hope for change which marked the beginning of the interwar period.

The sentiments expressed at the Western Canadian Labor Conference in Calgary in mid-March, 1919, were definitely in favour of change, although the degree is still a matter of contention. The name of the new organization summed up the aspirations of most of those in attendance. They wanted one big industrial union, geographically organized for optimum mobilization if the class struggle called for a general walkout in a given area.¹

While the participation of the Saskatchewan delegates to the Convention was minimal, the majority of them came away with no less enthusiasm for the decisions reached than did those from Winnipeg or

Vancouver. The Provincial Executive, consisting of F. Cropper, a railway carman from Moose Jaw, and William Munroe, a civic employee from the same city, James McMirtry, a railway carman from Saskatoon, and Joseph Sambrook (bricklayer) and Ralph Heseltine (carpenter) from Regina, began almost immediately to disseminate the industrial union gospel in their respective centres. Their intention was to convince as many as possible of the wisdom of the OBU's prospective course prior to a referendum which was to be held among all unionists. No formal structure was to be established until after the vote was taken.²

Mere days after the return of its delegates, the Moose Jaw Trades and Labor Council gave cautious and tentative approval to the principles of industrial unionism.³ But on April 15 when the council was called upon to consider a request from the OBU to sever its affiliation "with the present international craft unions", the proposition was defeated after a lengthy, bitter debate.⁴

The initial reaction of the Regina council was similar to that in Moose Jaw, namely caution. Fear was expressed that the internationals would descend on those assembled and inflict unknown punishment on the heretics. But when the very evident lack of concern of the parent bodies with Canadian affairs was demonstrated, the OBU appeal for the first per capita assessment was complied with. A special donation to the cause was also collected.⁵

The radicals had a secure grip on the Regina council and they had managed to convince the delegates of the "utter futility of separate action on the part of the workers, organized merely on craft lines, such action tending to strengthen the relative position of the Master class."⁶ By the end of April Regina labour seemed to be securely in the hands of

the OBU. On the 28th a packed meeting of the council passed a vote of confidence in the new organization⁷ and this sentiment was conveyed to a mass meeting of Regina workers the following day. All aspects of the situation were discussed, after which it was decided that there was no need for a vote "as not the slightest semblance of opposition asserted itself despite the fact that several representatives of the printing trades, who are supposed to be opposed to it, were present."⁸

The referendum, when taken, however, did not express the same degree of unanimity. The Regina local of the ITU, while having contributed to the sending of a delegate to Calgary,⁹ disaffiliated from the council when it pledged full support to the OBU. They were followed by the Railway Clerks No. 35 and the Amalgamated Association of Steet and Electric Railway Employees of America local No. 588.¹⁰

Besides James Somerville, the Machinists' organizer from Moose Jaw, who had opposed the OBU concept at the Calgary Convention, the most consistent defenders of the international union concept in Saskatchewan were the various locals of the ITU. In fact, they were the first to express open hostility to the idea of industrial unions. Moose Jaw local 627 on April 5 condemned the action of the Calgary Convention in a strongly worded resolution, especially the fact that the convention had expressed sympathy for "the Russian Bolshevists and German Spartican[sic] revolutionary movements."¹¹ Local 663 in Saskatoon was equally opposed, not so much because of the principle of industrial unionism, but because the OBU's advocacy of general and sympathetic strikes was contrary to the ITU constitution.¹²

The first representative of the international movement to tour Western Canada was B.W. Bellamy, secretary of the Western Canada

Conference of Typographical Unions. He had attended the Calgary Conference and he was convinced that this heresy had to be broken. He envisioned all sorts of difficulties from the OBU scheme. The fact that the new organization, believing as it did in the class struggle, had no use for hard and fast contracts with mutual obligations between union and employer, a principle which the ITU had long practised, made collective bargaining virtually useless. In addition, the OBU's belief in the general strike which could be called by a central board left no protection for the unfortunate employer, in Bellamy's opinion. All these facts together led Bellamy to believe, as did federal authorities, that the OBU was merely an attempt by the socialists to put unionism in a state of chaos as a step toward achieving their own ends.

It [the OBU] looks to me like the first movement to reduce organized labor to chaos, and then launch their Bolshevik propaganda....When we know that Bolshevism is going to be the emancipation of the wage earners, then will be the time to send them our fraternal greetings, and emulate them.¹³

Bellamy's fears, and those of many people, including the Federal Cabinet, seemed to have been justified with the advent of the Winnipeg General Strike. But for the One Big Union movement in Saskatchewan, it only delayed what appeared to be the inevitable rise of the industrial union concept to a position of dominance. Heseltine, as provincial chairman of the movement, took time off from his duties on the Strike Committee to attend an OBU conference on June 4, 1919.¹⁴

The lack-lustre response of Regina unionists must have jeopardized the position of the radicals on the Regina council and their situation in regard to the rank-and-file was not assisted in any way when the RNWMP raided the homes of Heseltine and Sambrook as well as the Labor Temple on June 30 in an attempt to find incriminating evidence.

While they only turned up copies of the strike bulletins from Calgary, Edmonton and Winnipeg together with some OBU and SPC pamphlets and newspapers, they must have scared off many potential and marginal adherents, because much OBU literature was privately destroyed.¹⁵ This fact, together with the collapse of the strike in Winnipeg and elsewhere, ended any possible chance of the One Big Union becoming a mass movement. Still, the radicals in Regina continued to hang onto the council for several weeks after the raid, in the face of increasing opposition from the rank-and-file. Finally, at the August 25 meeting, with two ranking officials of the TLC and AFL in attendance, the Council voted twenty-five to one to stay with the Congress. Heseltine resigned immediately as president of the council and he was joined by Sambrook, Fred Kinsella (the recording secretary) as well as the chairman of the Educational Committee, the chairman of the Organization Committee, the Statistician, and the Warden. They were immediately replaced by men more amenable to the principles of international unionism.¹⁶

Shortly after the resignation of the radicals, those unions that had consistently supported the TLC and the AFL reaffiliated with the council, having viewed the housecleaning as successful.¹⁷ The new executive, however, insisted that in fact a purge had not taken place and that the former executive had resigned of its own volition.¹⁸ Yet it is quite evident that the alternatives presented to the council by the AFL and the TLC were sufficient to make the majority of the delegates sit up and take notice.

In spite of the fact that the radicals had failed to maintain their hold on the council for the OBU, most of them persevered in attempting to "sell" it to Regina's working men, at least for a time.

Several times Heseltine was reported to have been seen handing out OBU literature on the streets. There were also reports of clandestine meetings to map strategy.¹⁹ In addition, under the chairmanship of Heseltine, a nebulous group called the Miscellaneous Unit of Regina (OBU) was established late in 1919 and it lasted for over a year.²⁰ At the same time, other individuals attempted to maintain membership in both the OBU and their respective internationals. Some of these men were successful, but when they were then elected as delegates to the Trades Council, as was the case with the bricklayers' and bookbinders' unions, there was hard feeling and recrimination over the principle of dual unionism, until such time as the unions were able to prove that their delegates were bona fide members of international unions.²¹ The problem of verifying the credentials of delegates, however, became increasingly less difficult as the prodigal sons returned to the international fold one by one.

The brief affair between the One Big Union and the Regina Trades and Labor Council was the closest any Saskatchewan centre came to raising an indigenous radical movement based on industrial unionism and the class struggle. The only reason that pockets of OBU activity existed after mid-1920 in the province was because it had taken root in more intensively industrialized areas outside the province and disciples were dispatched into Saskatchewan to gain converts. These organizers moved into the province from two directions--from Alberta where the One Big Union had wrested control of most of the mine fields from the United Mine Workers, and from Manitoba where the Winnipeg Trades and Labor Council had gone over to the OBU and where some of the non-operating unions at the Transcona railway shops had made the same decision.

Motivated by the purity and goodness of the cause, these men criss-crossed the province several times during the early twenties, sending in weekly reports to the Winnipeg headquarters, greatly overstating their success and playing down their failure.

The man who seemed to labour the hardest in Saskatchewan on behalf of the OBU, and whose career in the movement paralleled that of the movement itself was one Philip Martin Christophers. One of the guiding lights for the OBU takeover of the UMWA in 1919, he suffered for his beliefs when he was insulted, threatened and later run out of Drumheller in August, 1919, by the local citizenry.²² For his pain he was rewarded with the job of organizer. His weekly reports, published in the One Big Union Bulletin, chronicle his frustration.

Having left Alberta early in May, 1920, he visited Swift Current, where, after three days he realized that nothing could be done until after Moose Jaw labour demonstrated greater support for the OBU. Thus, in Moose Jaw he managed to organize a Hotel and Restaurant Employees' Unit with twenty-four members and he stayed long enough to see the unit on its feet. In the meantime, he attended meetings of the carpenters' local and the Trades and Labor Council. In the first instance, the attendance was small and in the second two international organizers, Varley of the AFL, and Somerville of the Machinists, were also present. Because of them, Christophers claimed that he was not given an opportunity to have the floor to defend the OBU and the Winnipeg Defense Committee. He encountered more success with the railway shop men, and on May 19 he organized a twenty-eight man Transportation Unit. But when he attended meetings of the Boilermakers and the Freight Handlers, he was again hounded by representatives of the internationals.²³ The

situation was repeated when he attempted to address a meeting of the Machinists' Helpers Union on the 25th.²⁴

From Moose Jaw Christophers went on to Regina where he contacted Sambrook and the Miscellaneous Unit. With their assistance a small Building Trades Unit was formed among disgruntled construction workers. From Regina he intended to travel to Saskatoon, but problems in the Crow's Nest Pass forced him to go west at the beginning of June.²⁵ He finally came to Saskatoon on the 16th, via Edmonton and Calgary, where he immediately established contact with Walter Mills, a former strike leader and the resident OBU organizer, and certain unhappy members of the building trades. A public meeting was called to form another unit of the OBU, but again a representative of the international movement was present.²⁶ After two more meetings, one in the Bijou Theatre on the 20th and the other in the Labor Temple on the 22nd, a Building Trades Unit was formed.

In North Battleford, where Christophers arrived on the 25th and spoke at a poorly attended meeting in the public library, he concluded that "there is little prospect of organizing a unit in North Battleford."²⁷ He returned to Saskatoon that evening. After another series of meetings with the teamsters and The Transportation Unit he left matters in Mills' hands and proceeded to the mine fields in the Bienfait-Estevan-Taylorton area. While making arrangements for a mass meeting he was taken from his hotel room by a "committee" at midnight of July 3rd, hustled into a car and abandoned in Noonan, North Dakota.²⁸

The hapless Christophers returned to Saskatchewan in October, 1920, to give evidence at the trial of his kidnappers. Before returning to his native Blairmore, Alberta, he visited his confreres in Moose Jaw

who he found were not holding meetings "owing to police interference."²⁹ On his return he promptly resigned as general organizer for the OBU, purportedly because he did not believe in long tenure of office.³⁰

There were others like Christophers, some more, some less successful. There was J.R. Knight, a former organizer for the SPC in Edmonton and a man who was under scrutiny from the RNWMP long before the formation of the OBU.³¹ His efforts were concentrated on convincing Eastern Canadian labour of the merits of industrial unionism at the same time as Christophers was doing the same in Saskatchewan. There was Austin Stanley, who was personally ordered out of Moose Jaw by the Chief of Police in October, 1920.³² There was Tom Cassidy, another long-time radical who concentrated on the railway workers, and who tried to carry the OBU banner into the northern United States in mid-1920.²³ There were also the already infamous Bob Russell and R.J. Johns, who made an organizing junket into Moose Jaw, Saskatoon and some of the province's railway towns in late April-early May, 1921.³⁴

On the local level there were enthusiasts such as the aforementioned Walter Mills of Saskatoon who attempted to expand the movement. Largely through Mills' efforts the Saskatoon units were the most active in the province, having their own headquarters where they even carried on classes in economics.³⁵ Through their zeal, delegations descended on the small towns around Saskatoon "distributing literature and plastering the town with stickers" in an attempt to organize the itinerants who had come to the area to harvest the crops.³⁶

It appears that part of the game not only for the OBU members from Saskatoon but for all the organizers was to send in glowing reports

to headquarters of the active response to their efforts. While these reports were inevitably exaggerated, a large number of workers in little towns scattered throughout the province were convinced of the wisdom of the OBU objectives, at least for a time. These centres included Kamsack, Watrous, Humboldt, Swift Current and North Battleford--all railway towns with one or more transportation units. Moose Jaw and Saskatoon had similar bodies, all organized in 1920-21 in response to threats of wage cuts due to the current recession.³⁷

The government agencies most concerned with matters of security saw a serious threat in the OBU and recommended caution in the face of its seeming collapse late in 1919, viewing it as only temporary. The RNWMP in Vancouver felt that it was only a ruse,³⁸ while some military authorities fully expected another general strike in May, 1920, under OBU auspices.³⁹

Perhaps in more industrialized provinces their concern was justified, but in Saskatchewan the collapse of the OBU late in 1919 was real, not just apparent. While there seemed to be a great deal of frenzied organizing going on, especially during the summer of 1920, the efforts were being spent on disgruntled minorities, usually in small centres. In actual fact, the One Big Union lost its initiative in Saskatchewan when it failed to maintain control of the trades and labour councils in the three large cities where it could have had some numerical strength. Lacking a sufficient base in the province, even the disgruntled minorities began to lose interest by 1921. Kamsack, long vaunted as an OBU stronghold among the railway workers, returned to the international movement in October 1921.⁴⁰ Within a year, the kingpin in Saskatoon, Walter Mills, followed the same course

to the applause of the international labour press.⁴¹ There were attempts to check the exodus in the years immediately thereafter,⁴² but the movement lacked money. In 1922 the One Big Union Bulletin began weekly weather prognostication contests and football pools to attract subscribers to enhance the revenues gleaned from per capita taxes. But by the beginning of 1925 these guessing contests provided the major source of revenue for the organization.⁴³

With declining membership, the executive of the One Big Union sought affiliation with other organizations. Bob Russell was in attendance as a non-communist delegate at the formation of the Workers' Party of Canada in February, 1922, but he was unable to reach a satisfactory agreement.⁴⁴ After 1925 there was talk of a closer working relationship between the OBU and the IWW, with the former becoming the Canadian administration of the latter,⁴⁵ but such negotiations had little effect on Saskatchewan, where in 1930, there were only four OBU units, two in Saskatoon, one in Regina and one in Moose Jaw.⁴⁶

The depression brought renewed hope to the One Big Union, which by this time was synonymous with Russell. It managed to gain some adherents in the relief camps established by the federal and provincial governments,⁴⁷ and in the cities it began to work closely with various organizations of unemployed.⁴⁸ Such people and organizations had no money. Thus, by the late thirties Russell's organization had reached an understanding with the nationalist, employer-oriented Canadian Federation of Labour and in 1939 Russell himself was seen organizing for the CFL in the southern Saskatchewan coal fields.⁴⁹ His dream of one big industrial union, however, had died while he was serving his sentence at the Stony Mountain Prison Farm twenty years earlier.

There is very little doubt that one of the contributing factors to the lack of success of the One Big Union was the Winnipeg General Strike, which occurred while a support referendum was in progress. In the public mind,⁵⁰ and more important, in the mind of government authorities, the strike was the result of the efforts of the One Big Union. The RNWMP officers who had infiltrated the Calgary Convention in March, 1919, reported that the OBU was revolutionary and would if it could take over the reins of government.⁵¹ In their opinion, "the 'reds' intend to provoke a general strike which may so develop as to bring about a political, as well as an economic revolution."⁵² When the strike came as predicted, the government reacted against the One Big Union, forgetting all precedents established concerning the principle of collective bargaining.⁵³ The strike was crushed, those who were employed under federal jurisdiction and did not go back to work when ordered were fired, and the strike leaders were arrested and later convicted. All these things, but especially the conviction of Russell, had what was termed "a most salutary effect" on the efforts of the OBU.⁵⁴ In fact, while the OBU was gaining strength in Winnipeg prior to the trial, public authorities observed that "in Southern Saskatchewan it is at a low ebb and the Winnipeg verdict may stun it...."⁵⁵ As the police recognized, Saskatchewan was unique among the Western provinces.⁵⁶ It had no "longshoremen, loggers and camp-workers"⁵⁷ and its miners had never known the benefits of organization. These were the occupations which provided hope for the OBU after 1919.

Even when attempts were made to establish the industrial union principle in other areas of industry, management took a strong stand against the movement. For example, at the Moose Jaw CPR shops OBU

notices were torn down and the circulation of literature on company property was prohibited.⁵⁸ In Regina, a woman working in a cafe was fired on the allegation that she was an OBU organizer.⁵⁹ When the OBU was successful in chartering a unit, as when Cassidy organized the carpenters in Saskatoon in September, 1920, the contractors simply refused to meet with the new union.⁶⁰ International organizers followed the OBU promoters like shadows, and local police made life difficult for them. Because of such acts, hints of discouragement began to appear among the glowing reports sent in by the itinerant organizers. One such man described Moose Jaw workers as "ancient fossils", very cleverly disguised.

In fact they look like human beings. If ever you are fortunate enough to come into contact with one, and are desirous of prolonging the agony, do not mention such words as bourgeoisie or proletariat, or it will immediately go away under the impression that you are trying to introduce a new breakfast food, and being very skeptical about anything new, it does not want anything which its ancestors did not have. A few specimens would be very useful for the next generation to study. In fact, I can see the professor putting one on exhibition before his class and saying: "This is the remains of a creature which used to exist on the prairies. It built houses for others to live in but had no home of its own. It made automobiles for others to ride in but never had one of its own. It made beautiful clothes for others to wear but was always clothed in rags. It stood in the bread line and discussed the destinies of nations."⁶¹

In 1921 the Saskatchewan labour movement was long past being influenced by harsh words. In fact, the OBU began to decline when it failed to attract the existing crafts and their councils in 1919. Some of the reasons for this situation are obvious. The fear of retribution after the Winnipeg General Strike, fanned by stories and rumours of postal workers begging government officials to get their jobs back must have made men hesitate to become overly active.⁶² More important perhaps than the issue of job security was the fear by the organized urban

worker of antagonizing the population of the city in which he lived, because as a unionist he was a member of a small minority and thus very vulnerable to pressures exerted by the public which believed that the OBU was "red" and was out to destroy the established order.

In addition, there were pressures from within the movement to avoid the heresy advocated by the OBU. Those unions that refused to listen to its appeal from the beginning condemned it for being utopian and schismatic, as well as Bolshevik. More important, however, was the fact that they felt they were better off in the hands of the international crafts. As one local pointed out to the Regina Trades Council,

The leaders of our craft unions have served us well in the past. Our financial interests are in good hands and it is certainly expecting too much to suppose that we are going to sacrifice the service and protection of which we are assured, by casting them to the four winds, and accept instead, something not proven.⁶³

What this local expressed was the economic reality which constantly faced the trade union movement in Saskatchewan. The particular nature of organized labour--the fact that it was still very much concentrated in the building and printing trades for lack of any other significant industry in its cities, the fact that it was small, weak, vulnerable and physically divided, together with the fact that it constantly suffered from financial problems--made it extremely dependent on the international craft union for its very existence. In addition, compared with the OBU structure and emphasis, the AFL-TLC was substantially more realistic, considering the rudimentary nature of the province's urban economy and the fact that within it the skilled had the upper hand.

The international craft union movement was not taking any chances,

however. The 1919 Convention of the TLC in Hamilton recommended the appointment of a western representative. In response, the AFL placed two men, Varley and Farmillo, both from the Alberta Federation of Labor, in the field.⁶⁴ In addition, such unions as the Machinists, which were being particularly threatened by the OBU, paid close attention to the movement's activities through their area representatives. The organizing campaign was supplemented "by a liberal supply of literature."⁶⁵ The result was that these men hounded the OBU organizers wherever they went and generally made life miserable for them. The TLC also exerted financial pressure on the trades councils to purge any and all delegates who still belonged to the OBU.⁶⁶

Needless to say, the combined organizing drive of the international movement was successful in Saskatchewan. In fact, the brief existence of the OBU in Saskatchewan, and indeed in Western Canada, was in some respects a blessing. It forced the international movement, essentially Eastern-based, to sit up and take notice of the dissatisfaction of organized labour in the West, part of it due to the neglect by the internationals of their Western locals. The organizing drive in 1919 and 1920 to counter the efforts of the OBU marked the first time since 1906-7 that any concerted effort had been made in Saskatchewan to create interest in the international movement. But alas, when the threat disappeared, so did the international interest. By 1923 the TLC had decided that an organizer should be sent into Western Canada only for the few months prior to the annual convention, probably to stave off criticism from the West.⁶⁷ In 1924 the AFL refused to appoint an organizer for Regina even when asked to do so by the Trades and Labor Council.⁶⁸

By 1924, however, the TLC, the AFL and the international trade union movement had little to worry about, because their affiliates in Saskatchewan were extremely passive. In fact, any more money spent on renewing interest in the principles of trade unionism would have been wasted in most cases. The labour movement in the province, and particularly in Regina, had "a notoriety that has reached Vancouver in the West and Halifax in the East" for its "lack of enthusiasm and the want of interest in labor activities...."⁶⁹

The evident apathy and conservatism expressed itself in diverse ways. Scant months after the "class struggle" of May-June, 1919, the Regina Trades and Labor Council again sent delegates to the deliberations of the Board of Trade, a deed that was vigorously censured earlier.⁷⁰ Later in the same year, not one resolution from a Saskatchewan union or trades council was presented to the 1920 convention of the TLC.⁷¹ Perhaps the best indication of the very evident lack of interest was the return of the old former OBU kingpins, Ralph Heseltine and Fred Kinsella, to the two top positions on the Regina Council by acclamation in January, 1923.⁷²

With the decline in interest in unionism, there was a commensurate decrease in membership. If the membership of a particular local did not suffer, the attendance at its meetings definitely did, with the result that little business was transacted to benefit the movement. As an example, a meeting of the Regina building trades locals was held to discuss organization work, but owing to the "Sparsity of attendance no business was done."⁷³ In addition, union revenue, based on the traditional per capita assessment, decreased, in turn affecting the work of the councils which also depended on similar assessments. There were

numerous reports of unions being as much as thirteen quarters behind in their payments to their councils. In fact, the local of the Barbers' union in Regina was in such sad financial shape that it sought readmission to the council as a new union so as to start with a clean slate.⁷⁴

Efforts to counteract the movement of workers away from the unions and of locals away from the councils by those in executive positions fell on barren ground in most instances. In the May 6, 1921, edition of the Western Labor News, the voice of the international movement for Manitoba and Saskatchewan, a column entitled "Regina Section" began to appear. However, the effort only lasted three months because the Regina council was unable to maintain a secretary to write the column.

Others on the Regina council felt that delegates were staying away because meetings were boring. It was then decided that discussion of business would be cut to a minimum and that a speaker on a topic of contemporary interest would close out the meeting.⁷⁵ However, within a year, this policy came up for reassessment and it was decided that the council would contribute \$50.00 toward a smoker to kick off a campaign to increase attendance, activity and interest. It was also decided that a "booster prize" would be offered to the individual not of the executive who had the best record of attendance and participation over a two month period.⁷⁶

The fact that a trades council had to go to the lengths that Regina's did to attract interest in the movement indicates that the situation was serious. Yet the apathy and conservatism that afflicted organized labour was not wholly the responsibility of factors inherent in the movement in that province, although the very nature of

Saskatchewan's industry made for a conservative labour movement. The withdrawal from a period of frenzied activity, which in some ways was unnatural to the movement, only increased the conservatism. In fact, some might argue that the factors producing conservatism coincided with a serious economic recession making active participation in union affairs a liability to the individual rank-and-file unionist.

While the recession of the early twenties, which followed a brief post-war boom, was at least continental in scope, two additional factors--the demise of the Wheat Board and the resultant plunge in the price of wheat, and the drought in southern and western parts of the province--made conditions in Saskatchewan dramatically more severe. The urban economy, so closely tied to the rural, suffered equally. As T.M. Molloy, the Commissioner of the Bureau of Labour, stated on two occasions in introducing his annual report, "The somewhat depressed financial conditions prevalent throughout the year were no doubt largely responsible for the limited actual expansion that took place industrially."⁷⁷

As far as organized labour was concerned, an indication that all was not well was shown by the reasons given for strike action. In 1921 there were seven disputes and all were caused by reductions in wages, and all but one--a strike of Regina printers--involved the construction industry.⁷⁸ As typical examples, in June, 1921, the plumbers throughout the province and the painters in Regina were offered 10% wage reductions. Both groups struck, the plumbers for at least five weeks tying up numerous projects throughout the province. In the case of the Regina Painters, they advertised to do painting and decorating for the general public on a material plus labour cost basis. In

retaliation, the contractors tried to convince the public not to hire strikers. But both sides must have suffered sufficiently because in two weeks a compromise was reached.⁷⁹

The same situation applied in 1922, but there were only three strikes and of these two--the bricklayers in Prince Albert and Saskatoon--were caused by wage reductions.⁸⁰ Of the two disputes in 1923, the one involving the Saskatoon Civic Employees' Union at the power plant was a direct result of the recession.⁸¹

To strike against a decrease in wages was a luxury that many unionists did not have the opportunity to enjoy, because the extreme nature of the recession had a profound impact on employment opportunities. Even the usually secure printing trades complained of layoffs in 1921, with few prospects of improvement.⁸² In the meantime, during the construction industry's peak season in the summer of 1921 there was still widespread unemployment, with numerous men canvassing the provincial employment offices daily in hopes of finding work.⁸³ With such a situation, the prospects for the winter months appeared grim, especially when civic authorities began to notice a marked increase in the number of indigents drifting to the cities as early as September.⁸⁴

Alarm was expressed almost immediately by organized labour and other interested organizations, in an effort to convince government authorities at all levels to do something to relieve the suffering.⁸⁵ Especially desirable was the creation of public works projects, again indicating the dependence that Saskatchewan labour had on government money. In this regard, Regina labour was particularly critical of the federal government for its failure to complete the Grand Trunk Hotel begun prior to the war, for its reluctance to pursue "the proposed,

and very needed C.N.R. Branch lines in this province" together with the Hudson Bay Railway, all equally important to the city, "being mainly a Farmers' distributing centre, and greatly dependent upon the welfare of the farmers..."⁸⁶ The traditional scapegoat in time of economic duress, sponsored immigration, was also condemned repeatedly.⁸⁷

Civic government was most accessible, so it was approached first for aid. In fact, a large delegation of unemployed which threatened to reach mob proportions "visited" the Moose Jaw City Council early in 1922 to express the grievances of the men it represented, causing some concern that the situation might get out of hand.⁸⁸ Already strapped for funds, civic authorities appealed immediately to the provincial and federal governments for public works and relief, especially after the completion of the harvest.⁸⁹

As a stopgap, early in 1920 the federal government instituted an emergency relief fund for returned soldiers. Under its terms, the men were entitled to a monthly grant if they registered for work with the local employment office. In a three week period the response was frightening, as registrations jumped from 76 to 428 in Regina, 190 to 366 in Saskatoon, and seventeen to 95 in Moose Jaw.⁹⁰ Statistics of this kind must have caused substantial consternation because the federal government called a conference of provincial and municipal officials in December, 1920, at which it was decided that relief costs in Saskatoon, Moose Jaw and Regina for the period December, 1920, to March, 1921, inclusive would be shared equally by all three levels of government up to a maximum of \$5,000 in each city per month.⁹¹

In the first winter of operation (1920-21) the relief plan disbursed a total of almost \$60,000. The following winter Swift

Current, Weyburn and Yorkton were included under its provisions and in an equal period over \$146,000 were spent.⁹² Given conditions like this, Molloy could predict in his 1920-21 report that "...the expression of extreme radical thought would appear to be dying out. This may...be due to the fact that a period of industrial depression when production will be curtailed is threatened."⁹³

While Molloy's prediction was accurate, his reason for the conservatism of the movement was too simple. While there were factors unique to Saskatchewan, such as the vulnerability of the trade union movement and its resultant dependence on the province's rural population, there were also continental trends, like the recession, at work creating an even more conservative movement. Even with the return of prosperity in the last half of the decade, the expected revitalization of the movement did not occur.

The latter half of the 1920's is viewed by some writers as unique in that it was a period of prosperity in which prices remained stable while wages rose, due largely to rapid increases in productivity. The apathy generated by the Red Scare continued. It was augmented by the retaliation of management against labour through such open shop campaigns as the "American Plan."⁹⁴ Although the name was changed, the campaign was the same in Canada. For example, in 1925 the Moose Jaw City Council, along with councils in Winnipeg, Montreal, Toronto and other centres would not allow the local fire brigades to organize early.⁹⁵ Because of the scope of the campaign it caused no little concern for the weakened TLC. But, lacking money, the Congress could retaliate only by a label campaign.⁹⁶ Naturally, its membership declined. From a high of almost 174,000 in

1921 it dropped steadily to 103,000 by 1926 due to disaffiliations and complete losses to the movement, and it only managed to regain 21,000 of these by the end of the decade.⁹⁷

While the Saskatchewan movement presented neither an apparent nor a real threat to anyone, it suffered together with the senior bodies. The fact that its local unions were extremely dependent on the TLC, the AFL and the international unions has been stressed repeatedly. Therefore, even when enough interest was aroused among those still involved to make "a concerted effort...to secure new members and rebuild the unions in general," they were unable to secure the necessary assistance in the form of money and personnel to do the job.⁹⁸ The problem was simple, yet difficult to solve. The decline in membership at the local level meant that there was less per capita going into the coffers of the central bodies, which meant that in turn the central bodies had less money with which to strengthen organization at the local level.⁹⁹ Local leaders, however, feeling that the central office was indifferent to their needs, lost whatever momentary interest they had had.

The same dilemma applied at a more rudimentary level in the relationship of the local union and the trades council. The unions, weakened by a loss of membership, were unable to pay the per capita tax to the councils, which the councils sorely needed to revive interest among the self-same unions.

Thus hampered by a lack of resources, discouraged by rank-and-file apathy and indifference, and fearful of further attacks from employers, those who still managed to maintain some interest in the movement further weakened it by quarreling among themselves. The

cynics who felt that further activity was a waste of time, were opposed by those who thought that there was still hope.¹⁰⁰

Personal and interorganizational disputes pervaded all levels of the trade union structure. Members of some locals fought among themselves for various reasons. Other locals passed resolutions against the trades council, leading in some cases, as with the Saskatoon Musicians' Union No. 553 in June, 1926, to outright disaffiliation.¹⁰¹ In the printing and allied trades, where co-operation between the various unions involved had been traditional within the Printing Trades Councils, the necessary co-operation proved difficult to achieve. This caused the Western Labor News to comment:

The efforts of the employers were and always will be to split the unions up into as many sections as they can possibl [sic] do so, and by so doing set man against man, and the creation of a spirit of distrust and fear and frantic competition between brother unionists, would do more to return labor to the condition of serfdom than anything else.

While it must be admitted that in the past the Typographical Unions have kept pretty much to themselves, thinking perhaps that they were of a little superior intelligence (which is possibly the result of possessing a strong organization) many of the individuals comprising their membership are waking up to the advantages to be gained by a better understanding between the Allied Crafts, and it is to be hoped that in the near future some form of joint action will be taken towards the desired end.¹⁰²

Despite expressions to the contrary, however, the "spirit of distrust and fear" continued to permeate the movement. In July, 1923, for example, the suspicion was current throughout the province that the provincial TLC executive was not representing the interests of the province's unionists and there was some talk of forming a federation on the assumption that it would be a more representative organization.¹⁰³

Weakened in this manner, divided within themselves and devoid of general rank-and-file interest, many of the province's unions and trades

councils were prime targets for the infiltration of activists from various Communist party inspired organizations. This situation was especially critical in Saskatoon, where all the fights within the council were advertised in great detail in the WPC organ, The Worker.¹⁰⁴ But such tactics only weakened and divided further an already tired movement.

When considered in the light of the 1920's, the organized labour movement in Saskatchewan was rather a lack-lustre creature. Badgered by its opponents, subjugated by its environment, ravaged by depression and emasculated by prosperity, it presented a poor example for any theory of progress. In actual fact, the rapid rise and only slightly less rapid decline of the One Big Union was the dominant event of the post-war decade, to the extent that the career of the OBU characterized the decade.

Born of dissent and disgust with existing institutions and methods immediately after the war, the OBU promised sweeping changes. But it aroused emotions, both positive and negative, wherever it made contact with the existing movement. For a brief period it made converts with relative ease because it offered answers. But its rhetoric, some of its leadership, plus the Winnipeg General Strike with which it was linked, raised fear in the public mind, a not uncommon emotion in 1919. From the point of view of the federal government, it had to be stopped and its leadership interned, which it was. From the point of view of the TLC, any further inroads into existing organizations by the industrial, anti-international concept had to be curtailed. This also was successful. In Saskatchewan the process was even simpler, because the OBU idea was unrealistic, considering the nature

of the economy and the organized labour forces that worked there. If one looks at the decade from both ends, the cure was worse than the disease.

The war and the immediate post-war period created a movement which was vibrant, active and concerned. It was even united, at least briefly. The OBU symbolized these characteristics. Conversely, the defeat of the OBU and its eventual demise symbolized the rejection of these characteristics, through fear, dependence and a number of other factors. Although the internationals displayed some momentary interest in the affairs of their affiliates, they did not follow through. Hence, their contribution was a weak, apathetic movement, ill-prepared to face the pressures of the next decade.

FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER III

¹Woodsworth Papers, MG 27 III C-7, Vol. 10, file 38, pamphlet "One Big Union" n.d.

²RLO, 1919, p. 23; Western Labor News, April 4, 1919 (Supplement: Transcript of Proceedings of Calgary Convention.)

³Morning Leader, March 19, 1919.

⁴Ibid., April 16, 1919 and The Daily News, April 16, 1919.

⁵The Morning Leader, March 25, 1919 and RT&LC Minutes, March 24, 1919 meeting.

⁶RT&LC Minutes, April 20, 1919 meeting; quotation taken verbatim from primary resolution passed at Calgary.

⁷The Morning Leader, April 29, 1919.

⁸Ibid., April 30, 1919.

⁹RT&LC files, A.E. Humphries to Sambrook, March 5 and April 9, 1919.

¹⁰RT&LC files.

¹¹The Morning Leader, April 7, 1919.

¹²Saskatoon Typographical Union Minutes, April 10, 1919 meeting.

¹³The Morning Leader, April 19, 1919.

¹⁴RT&LC Minutes, May 26, 1919 meeting.

¹⁵RCMP files, RG 18, B-5, Vol. 60.

¹⁶Ibid., Ryan report, Aug. 25, 1919, Leopold report, Aug. 26, 1919; RT&LC Minutes, Aug. 25, 1919 meeting.

¹⁷G.W. Durand (secretary Brotherhood of Railway Clerks) to J.A. Regan, Aug. 31, 1919, RT&LC files.

¹⁸Ibid., Neil Comeau (RT&LC secretary) to Brotherhood of Railway Clerks, Sept. 13, 1919.

¹⁹RCMP files, RG 18, B-5, Vol. 60, Ryan report, Sept. 7, 1919.

²⁰OBU Bulletin, Jan. 8, 1921. Sergeant Leopold joined the Miscellaneous Unit as J.W. Esselwein and became its Financial Secretary and Treasurer.

²¹See RT&LC files for correspondence between the council in Regina and the B&MIU#1 and the Bookbinders on this issue.

²²OBU Bulletin, Nov. 29, 1919.

²³Ibid., June 5, 1920.

²⁴Ibid., June 19, 1920.

²⁵Ibid., June 19, 1920.

²⁶Ibid., July 3, 1920.

²⁷Ibid., July 24, 1920.

²⁸Ibid., See Chapter V for a more detailed treatment of OBU work in the southern Saskatchewan coal mines.

²⁹Ibid., Nov. 6, 1920.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹RCMP files, RNWMP letter book, RG 18, A-2, V. 137, p. 19. A.A. McLean to Commissioner RNWMP, Regina, Feb. 28, 1919.

³²OBU Bulletin, Oct. 9, 1920.

³³Ibid., July 24, 1920.

³⁴Ibid., May 7, 1921.

³⁵Ibid., Oct. 30, 1920.

³⁶Ibid., Sept. 10, 1921.

³⁷Ibid., Aug. 27, 1921.

³⁸RCMP files, RG-18 A-5, Vol. 1, A.A. McLean to N.W. Rowell, Sept. 9 & 11, 1919.

³⁹DND files, RG 24-A, Vol. 2553, file C-2102, Maj. Gen. H.D. Bretchen (GOCMD 10) to Secretary, Militia Council, Jan. 2, 1920.

⁴⁰Western Labor News, Nov. 11, 1921.

⁴¹Ibid., Oct. 6, 1922.

⁴²OBU Bulletin, Sept. 28, 1922 and Sept. 13, 1923.

⁴³TLC Executive Board Minutes, Jan. 30-31, 1925 meeting.

⁴⁴William Rodney, Soldiers of the International, (Toronto: 1968), pp. 50-1.

⁴⁵RLO, 1924, p. 173 and 1928, p. 170.

⁴⁶Ibid., 1930, p. 51.

⁴⁷OBU Bulletin, Aug. 24, 1933, Oct. 19, 1933, Feb. 8, 1934; Woodsworth Papers, MG III, C 7, Vol. 10, file 35, Ralph Dipaolo to Mrs. E.B. Tanner, Feb. 22, 1932.

⁴⁸RT&LC files, R.C. McCutchan to Heseltine, May 28, 1933.

⁴⁹See Chapter V for more details.

⁵⁰As an indication of the public attitude toward labour radicalism see Western Labor News, May 21, 1920 for an account of the public uproar aroused in May, 1920 when Westminster Presbyterian Church in Regina rented quarters for F.J. Dixon to speak on behalf of the Winnipeg Defense Fund.

⁵¹Borden Papers, file 515, RNWMP report Re: Interprovincial Labor Convention, Calgary, March 19, 1919.

⁵²Ibid., A. Bowen Perry to RNWMP Comptroller, April 2, 1919.

⁵³David J. Bercuson in his article "The Winnipeg General Strike, Collective Bargaining and the One Big Union Issue", CHR, Vol. LI, No. 2, June 1970, pp. 164-176 deals with the government attitude in detail.

⁵⁴Borden Papers, file 559, A.A. McLean report, Dec. 31, 1919.

⁵⁵Ibid.

⁵⁶DND files, RG 24, C, Vol. 407, NSC 1055-2-21, Vol. 1, "Memorandum on Revolutionary Tendencies in Western Canada" prepared by Assistant Comptroller RNWMP, n.d. p.6.

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸OBU Bulletin, Nov. 29, 1919.

⁵⁹Ibid., Dec. 25, 1920.

⁶⁰SA, Dunning Papers, 14294, Molloy to Dunning, Sept. 27, 1920.

⁶¹OBU Bulletin, March 26, 1921.

⁶²See Meighen Papers 32835-32915 for letters from former postmen begging to be reinstated. See also Post Office Files, RG-3, 10, Vol 9, file 26922, W.A. Robinson (Saskatoon Mail Clerk) to PMG, March 3, 1927.

⁶³RT&LC files, G.W. Durand (Rec. sec. Brotherhood of Railway Carmen, Lodge 35) to Sambrook, July 4, 1919.

⁶⁴TLC Proceedings, 1920, pp. 30-1 and TLC Exec. Board Minutes, May 6 & 7, 1920 meeting. See also editorial "Secession Will Never Get You Anywhere", Canadian Congress Journal, June, 1923, pp. 248-50, 260.

⁶⁵Proceedings, 1920, pp. 68-9.

⁶⁶RT&LC files, Neil Comeau (RT&LC secretary) to Draper, April 19, 1920.

⁶⁷TLC Exec. Board Minutes, Jan. 21, 1923 meeting.

⁶⁸For an example of a classic run-around from the AFL see the correspondence between E. Ross, secretary of the Regina Council, and Samuel Gompers, March-April, 1924 in RT&LC files.

⁶⁹Western Labor News, July 1, 1921.

⁷⁰RT&LC Minutes, Jan. 12, 1920 meeting.

⁷¹Meighen Papers, 029551-62.

⁷²RT&LC Minutes, Jan. 22, 1923 meeting.

⁷³RT&LC files, RT&LC Organization Committee Report, March 24, 1924.

⁷⁴RT&LC files, C.G. Hodges (Secretary Barbers #713) to Secretary, RT&LC, June 9, 1924.

⁷⁵RT&LC minutes, Dec. 22, 1922 meeting.

⁷⁶Ibid., Sept. 12, 1923 meeting.

⁷⁷Bureau of Labour Reports, 1922-3 and 1923-4, p. 7.

⁷⁸Ibid., 1921-2, p. 57.

⁷⁹Western Labor News, June 10 and 24 and July 8, 1921.

⁸⁰Bureau of Labour Report, 1922-3, p. 44.

⁸¹Ibid., 1923-4, p. 68; The Worker, March 1, 1923.

⁸²Western Union Printer, Feb. 22, 1921; Western Labor News, June 24, 1921.

⁸³Western Labor News, June 24, 1921.

⁸⁴Martin Papers, 39659-61, L.A. Thornton (Regina City Commissioner) to Premier Martin, Sept. 23, 1921.

⁸⁵eg. Ibid., 30210, A.T. Hunter (secretary Regina GWVA) to Martin, Nov. 17, 1921.

⁸⁶RT&LC files, RT&LC to Tom Moore (TLC President), Aug. 24, 1924.

⁸⁷Western Labor News, June 24, 1921; The Progressive, Sept. 20, 1923.

⁸⁸OBU Bulletin, March 2, 1922.

⁸⁹Martin Papers, 30184-5, A. MacG. Young to Martin, June 22, 1921.

⁹⁰Dunning Papers, 14339, Molloy to Dunning, Dec. 21, 1920.

⁹¹Bureau of Labour Report, 1920-21, p. 38; Martin Papers, 39617, Martin to J. Grassick (Regina Mayor), Dec. 23, 1920.

⁹²Bureau of Labour Report, 1921-2, pp. 55, 57.

⁹³Ibid., 1920-21, p. 39.

⁹⁴Stuart Jamieson, Industrial Relations in Canada, (Toronto: 1957), p. 39. See the chapter "A Decade of Decline" in J.G. Rayback's A History of American Labor (New York: 1966) for an examination of the reasons for the conservatism of the American movement in the 1920's.

⁹⁵TLC Executive Board Minutes, Jan. 30-31, 1925 meeting.

⁹⁶Proceedings, 1920, p. 70.

⁹⁷RT&LC minutes, Jan. 8, 1940 meeting--insert "TLC Financial Statement, Sept. 1, 1938-Aug. 31, 1939", p. 12.

⁹⁸RT&LC files, Organization Committee Report, March 24, 1924; RT&LC minutes, Feb. 11 and 25, 1924 meetings.

⁹⁹RT&LC files, P.M. Draper to all affiliates, Feb. 8, 1924.

¹⁰⁰As an example, the Saskatoon Council was seriously divided over the fielding of labour candidates in the 1923 municipal election, some executive members voicing the opinion that the showing of the existing labour aldermen demonstrated that it was a waste of money. The Worker, Dec. 22, 1923.

¹⁰¹RLO, 1926, pp. 214-5.

¹⁰²Western Labor News, July 1, 1921.

¹⁰³The Worker, July 18, 1923. See Chapter X for a more detailed discussion of the recurring federation controversy.

¹⁰⁴i.e., May 30, 1923.

CHAPTER IV

TO MAINTAIN A FOOTHOLD: THE DEPRESSION YEARS, 1930-1939

It is a generally accepted fact that the suffering in Saskatchewan during the Great Depression was the most severe in Canada. The accounts of hardship in the dust bowl are so numerous that they are almost commonplaces. Some writers view the period with bitterness, while others have the necessary detachment to approach the subject with a sense of proportion. But the traditional emphasis has been on the farmer and his troubles. Little attention has been paid to those who resided in the small cities that dotted the province. Granted, the suffering experienced by those in the southern part of the province was great, and many of them were forced to leave the land and settle elsewhere, but there was less dislocation in the major part of the province where the emphasis was not solely on grain production. While objects previously considered necessities became luxuries to be sacrificed, the economy in these areas made the traditional adaptation to a more primitive form, barter replaced cash, but few starved. The cities, however, so highly dependent on the surrounding countryside, could not survive as cashless societies. Their economies were too complicated, and the various parts were too highly integrated to allow for an immediate adaptation to a more primitive system.

The member of a union was an obvious example of a human being totally dependent on the constant availability of cash. The shortness of the work season on the prairies meant that he had few accumulated cash reserves and what he did have were readily exhausted

with any downward turn in the economy. Further, the fact that he belonged to an organized body with its established standards and rules of conduct greatly decreased the adaptability of the individual worker to the extreme economic dislocation. As a result the organization suffered, as a logical matter of course. Membership declined drastically to the point that many unions existed in name only. These organizations that managed to hang on did so only through the tenacity of a few individuals who still felt that the ultimate salvation of the worker lay in the trade union movement. While some unionists found work outside of union shops, a large number reluctantly joined the ranks of the unemployed. If they had families they depended on government for assistance. If they were single they ultimately landed up in a camp created to accommodate them.

Thus seriously weakened, the international craft unions had difficulty withstanding the schismatic pressures exerted by other organizations such as the boss-oriented Canadian Federation of Labour, and the revolutionary affiliates of the Communist Party of Canada. Yet, in spite of the hardship suffered by unionists, the appeal of the CFL and the Workers' Unity League had little impact on the movement until very late in the decade. Communist organizations had far greater success with some farmers and with the unemployed.

Except for the devotion of a handful of individuals who had jobs, it is difficult to say what kept the movement alive in Saskatchewan through the early thirties. It received no assistance from the international movement, which was similarly impoverished. Yet those that remained were relatively active in all matters pertaining to their welfare, and thus maintained a structure on which organization

could be based late in the decade when an attitude and environment more favourable to unionism was created.

As there was no provincial central body except the TLC provincial executive, which only met yearly to prepare a legislative programme, no statistics exist to indicate the numerical decline of the trade union movement during the thirties. Many of the unions listed in the Department of Labour's annual Report on Labour Organization existed in name only, while others failed to answer the Department's yearly questionnaires. But the collapse of the rural economy through falling wheat prices and various natural maladies greatly harmed the urban economy, and with it, urban organized labour. Again the value of building permits issued in the province's three major cities indicates the extent of the collapse.

	1928	1929	1930	1931
Regina	6,619,206	10,022,631	2,891,542	1,598,440
Saskatoon	5,756,442	5,903,133	5,314,440	2,868,515
Moose Jaw	1,074,078	1,026,408	1,058,303	87,630 ¹

No further reports were issued by the Department, but isolated reports indicate a further decline. In 1933 the value of building in Prince Albert dropped to \$41,000, the lowest figure since 1917.² In January, 1936 there was only one building permit issued in Regina, for \$216 to repair a house damaged by fire.³ The effect of such facts on the construction industry and the building trade unions is obvious. Men took whatever work they could get, many swallowed thier pride to take labourer's pay for carpenter's work.⁴ Even for these jobs they had to compete with redundant farm labour which flocked to the cities,

and with recent immigrants who would accept any wage in order to work. For facilitating the movement of farmers to the cities, the railways came under blistering criticism for failing to enforce regulations.⁵ In hopes of cutting down competition from immigrants, the unions only expanded the extent of their traditional exclusionist position.

The railway unions, which had long believed in working independently of the trades and labour councils, began to feel differently when they saw their strength decline. From 1929 to the end of 1931, the CNR and the CPR together reduced their staffs by 32,299 men. During 1932 the publicly owned line made a further reduction of 14,800. While figures were not available for the CPR, it was estimated that their reduction amounted to another 8,000, making a national total of 55,529 men thrown out of work in three years and some months.⁶ Saskatchewan's share of this figure is hard to ascertain.

Even the traditionally secure printing trades unions bore their share of suffering. While fewer of their members were unemployed through the decade, they did face substantial wage cuts. For example, the pressmen, stereotypers and bookbinders in Saskatoon accepted a ten percent decrease in wage in November, 1931. The ITU members working at the Star-Phoenix office refused to accept the settlement and walked out. The paper merely replaced them with non-union labour.⁷ Other unions took the same recourse against wage cuts, but they soon discovered that labour was cheap and that management had the upper hand. The result of this discovery was that disputes were few. In 1930 there were two disputes but in the next two years there were a total of thirteen as unions attempted to maintain their ground. However, in the period 1933-35 there were none, and only one in 1936,

indicating that all the fight and most of the personnel had left the movement.⁸

The criterion for survival of a given union was determined more than ever by the skill of the trade which its membership practised. Those associated with the printing industry were probably the best off of all. In contrast was the ill-starred career of the Regina local (No. 816) of the Hotel and Restaurant Employees International Alliance, which provides a case study of a union of unskilled trying to keep their organization alive. Organized among cooks, waiters and waitresses in November, 1936, presumably because its members could not survive as individuals, the local had to ask for donations from various unions to obtain a charter, "owing to the starvation wages that [the] employees receive."⁹

It is not difficult to see the reasons for the union's vulnerability. Its membership was scattered throughout the capital city, in numerous cafes and restaurants. Also, they were unskilled for the most part. Not only were their numbers dispersed, but within a given establishment they worked different shifts, making communication between members difficult. In addition, most of those who worked in the industry were recent arrivals from the farm, who chose it above domestic service, which paid as little as five dollars a month plus board and room. They were further hampered by the fact that many of them were virtually illiterate. Thus afflicted, the cooks and waiters had trouble in many cases getting the legally established minimum wage, the forty-eight hour week and the One Day Rest in Seven from a well organized hotel and restaurant association, let alone union recognition. The union fought two strikes for recognition, one in December, 1936,

and another in July, 1937, both of which were settled by the replacement of union workers.¹⁰ Yet somehow contracts were signed.

The employers inevitably continued to intimidate the union, but its most serious problem came from within. Because of most members' ignorance of union matters, and the scattered nature of the membership working irregular shifts, the bulk of the local's affairs were handled by a seemingly enthusiastic business agent. However, long after it was too late, it was discovered that the man had a bad habit of sowing dissension through misrepresentation, not only between the members themselves but also between the union and the Trades Council. Also, an audit disclosed that he had mishandled the union's hard-earned funds. For his acts he was expelled, but not before an investigation by the council and by the international to which the local belonged.¹¹

While the plight of Local 816 of the Hotel and Restaurant Employees was well documented, it was certainly not unique. Given the state of organized labour in Saskatchewan, the foundations of most locals were shaky during prosperity and their problems were compounded during the depression. Under such circumstances, the movement was under threat of demise. There were instances when the depression was thought to be a benefit to the movement, as with the Moose Jaw bus drivers who in 1935 sought organization because of low wages.¹² But such instances were isolated. An official of the Regina Council summed up the true situation when he observed:

There is (and I think naturally) a constant fear of reprisal. Jobs are scarce and the waiting lists are yards long. The employees desire the meagre degree of independence, which a scanty salary offers, in preference to being out of work and on relief rolls.¹³

Even such time-honoured institutions as the local labour temple in Regina were in danger of going under for lack of funds.¹⁴ The unity on which the movement was founded, and which was lacking before, proved to be even more difficult to achieve. It became virtually impossible to send even a respectable delegation from Saskatchewan unions to the TLC convention, especially when they were held in such far-off places as Montreal in 1938. On this occasion the Regina council was only able to donate \$20.00 to send one delegate. The remainder had to be raised by a special committee.¹⁵ Only when the convention was held in Regina in 1930 was anything approaching a full contingent able to attend. The depression only increased the isolation of Saskatchewan unionists from the rest of the movement. The TLC and the internationals were reluctant to remedy the situation and decrease the isolation even if they had wanted to. After achieving a peak of 141,137 members in 1931, the membership of the Congress steadily declined until 1935. More important from the point of view of the financially dependent Saskatchewan unions, Congress revenues dropped by \$15,000 to \$25,228.54 between 1933 and 1934. This level was maintained until 1937, but even with the apparently renewed vigour Saskatchewan unions were not on the TLC's list of priorities.¹⁶

Facing only the bleakest of futures, some unionists inevitably followed the example of the veteran Regina unionist and former president of the council, George Alley, who decided to return to the Old Country, "where they have begun to master the Depression"¹⁷ But most did not have the financial wherewithal or the domestic flexibility to follow them, and had to stay and take what they could get within or

without the trade union movement.

Whatever was left of the TLC movement in the province was carried on and sustained by the unceasing devotion of a handful of men. Heseltine and Cocks in Regina, Andy Tait in Moose Jaw, and Cy Brunskill in Saskatoon were representative of such men. Their sacrifice was substantial. For example, when the Regina Trades and Labor Council could not raise enough money to send even one delegate to the TLC convention beyond providing one return economy rail ticket, Bill Cocks' wife would pack a lunch sufficient to feed her husband for the entire trip, Cocks himself would supply the accommodation and in this way Regina labour would at least have token representation.¹⁸ An organization drive by the councils to cut losses was out of the question until after 1936, when the situation eased. Even direct confrontation with unions that allowed their members to work in "unfair" shops proved futile. Thus the main role of unionists was twofold. On the one hand they attempted to grapple with the problem of depression and suggest solutions, both realistic and otherwise, to government authorities. On the other hand, as the depression dragged on, the emphasis shifted to that of watchdog, to minimize abuse in relief systems practised in various cities.

Ideally, in labour's view, "...if all the workers would ask for the union label when buying goods their [sic] would not be much need for such hearings as the Stevens commission."¹⁹ The second best solution was the provision of adequate public works at union wages. The Regina council called on the federal government to issue at least one half billion dollars for federal and provincial works projects to include such things as buildings, bridges, subways and good roads,

because "out of over one million unemployed persons in the Dominion of Canada, forty percent of these are, in normal times engaged in building construction...." In this way

We feel that it is the duty of the Government of this country to start the wheels of industry turning, in the interests of the people as a whole, who have so long suffered in want and expectancy for the dawn of a brighter future, which we all realize, can only be brought about, when all people are again placed in gainful employment...²⁰

When the Bennett government did announce a substantial works programme in 1934, Saskatchewan labour again protested, this time against "the discrimination shown against this Province" in the low allotment per capita because "the needs of Saskatchewan...are greater than those of any other province...."²¹

Labour's traditional opponents, the builders' exchanges, agreed wholeheartedly with the desire for more public works.²² They also agree that their province was being discriminated against. As the Saskatoon exchange complained:

In the West...we do not have the factories to take care of our unemployment workers. This could be very well remedied by commencing some of the deferred works, such as the Armories, Union Depot etc. Then our citizens would be at least on an equal footing with those in the East, and not any longer dependent upon the Government for relief.²³

But the concurrence of management with labour ceased when the latter began to suggest adjustments in the credit system to lower the rate of interest on all mortgages by at least fifty percent.²⁴ In fact, Saskatchewan labour went so far as to meet with the provincial government in August, 1931, to ask either that urban dwellers be placed under the provisions of the Debt Adjustment Act or preferably that a moratorium on payments be declared for the duration of the crisis.²⁵ Another suggestion

was that the government refuse to pay exchange rates to foreign countries.²⁶ For some, however, reform of the financial system, with controls on the granting of credit or with the introduction of centralized banking, were only stopgaps and palliatives. For them, the misery due to unemployment and the closing down of industries was the result of the failure of the system of private industry working for profit. Hence they, like the Saskatoon Trades and Labor Council, demanded that the federal government

enact immediate legislation to remedy this condition by changing entirely the whole economic system now in existence preventing all profiteering by the financial interests and making a more equitable distribution of this country's wealth so as to provide every and all human being in the country with an abundance of wholesome food, clothing and shelter, also recreation and entertainment.²⁷

Those that felt that reform began at home advocated industrial unionism as the ultimate answer.²⁸ There were still others who wanted labour to voice its solutions on the political platform. But reform in the direction of socialism, industrial unionism, or political action was only for the record for the majority. Most craft unionists took a more realistic stance. In mid-1932 even the TLC Executive Board reached a "unanimity of opinion as to the necessity for reduction of hours to cope with the unemployment situation."²⁹ Here, governments at all levels were only too willing to comply. For example, the Saskatoon City Council in June, 1931, began to use two shifts of five hours each on road work. It also insisted on hand labour instead of machines.³⁰ Similarly, the federal government used manual labour instead of power shovels in the construction of government elevators at Moose Jaw and Saskatoon, even though the increased cost amounted to \$53,000.³¹ But when the provincial authorities suggested a new order for the Minimum Wage Board reducing the minimum wage for women by

\$1.00 per week in most industries and 50¢ in mail order houses³²

labour was quick to protest. The very basis of organized labour would be undermined. As the brief of the Regina council read:

Reductions in wages are in the long run detremintal [sic] to the public because reductions in one class of industry result in reductions in other classes and the final result is a reduction of the purchasing power of the public and a lowering of the standard of living.³³

But because of the economic state of the province and the weak and ever declining role of organized labour as a determinant of provincial policy, the protests were in vain.

As the depression wore on and as financial resources ran out, government authorities paid less attention to labour's appeal for public works as a solution to the workers' plight. Increasing numbers had to give up union membership or, worse still, face the indignity of direct relief in order to survive. It was the protection of the interest of these individuals that the vestiges of organized labour increasingly turned their attention. The trades councils were quick to take up the cause of all men who had lost their jobs for no apparent reason. They condemned the limiting of the franchise in Regina to those who could pay city taxes. While the councils opposed work for relief on principle, viewing it as "chattel slavery",³⁴ they took delight in reporting men working and drawing relief at the same time, as well as those who were holding down two jobs at once. Also, they criticized the provision of sub-standard housing for those on relief. And to ease their plight they advocated the issuance of free street car passes.³⁵ If the city complained of its inability to pay for the rapidly escalating costs of direct relief, labour immediately brought to their attention the high wages paid to relief administrators

when the same jobs could have been done by aldermen with the added benefit that they could get to "know first hand just who was getting relief."³⁶ For the same reason, the Regina council condemned the city for granting a tax exemption to the local badminton club.³⁷

The crusade, self-proclaimed by organized labour and more particularly by the trades councils, to scrutinize relief administration was greatly assisted by the various organizations formed by the unemployed. In fact, initially the TLC unions encouraged the unemployed to organize, providing space for their meetings³⁸, and sought affiliation with them, knowing that the benefits would be mutual. In return for labour's protests to government officials in cases of lax administration, the unemployed kept the trades council informed of cases where unemployed were being used on jobs which rightfully belonged to paid labour.³⁹ In addition, some thought that co-operation with the unemployed would provide unionists the opportunity of educating their less fortunate brethren in the principles of international craft unionism if the depression lifted. But when the unemployed organizations proliferated to the point of confusion and the Communist party gained control of some of them, labour quickly took steps to ignore them.⁴⁰

One other group that the surviving unionists catered to, at least for a time, were the railway brotherhoods. The issue which brought the previously aloof self-proclaimed elite closer to the movement affiliated with the trades councils was the proposed amalgamation of the two transcontinental railway systems as recommended by the Duff Commission. On behalf of the railway unions the Regina council called a mass meeting early in 1933 to discuss the question. Two years later

the council was still at it, this time trying to get the support of the Board of Trade and the Retail Merchants' Association against the Commission report. In the meantime, Regina unionists entertained several speakers who discussed the ramifications of amalgamation, but the actual impact of the national campaign is unknown.⁴¹

The influence of Saskatchewan organized labour must certainly have declined as the movement declined in numerical strength. How extreme the loss was is difficult to ascertain but in 1938 when membership was again on the upswing, there were only 6,530 members of 103 locals,⁴² not all of which were affiliated with the TLC. But as more and more were forced to join the ranks of the unemployed during the first half of the decade, this discussion must of necessity deal with the actual union members.

The stories of rural suffering are numerous, but the plight of the city dwellers was no less pathetic for having received far less publicity. For example, in November, 1930, it was reported to Prime Minister Bennett that single men in Moose Jaw were forced to sleep in the round house at night and to subsist on two fifteen cent meal tickets per day. To add to the indignity, the local constabulary registered a personal description of each man "just as if he was a criminal. Consequently a lot of men don't go there as they don't want there [sic] life history put on police blotters."⁴³ During the day they looked for work. One of these unfortunate souls complained:

For days and weeks I have tramped Saskatoon in search of anything in the way of work, willing to work 15 cts an hr or less if need be, but could I get work, No. I am a man of almost 6 ft and 163 lbs, and a resident of Saskatoon. Everywhere where their [sic] is a little work going on, or where it is rumored

that there is to be some alterations made in a building, there are the usual from 5 to 50 men waiting days in advance of the work, they wait and sit around the job all day and everyday [sic] in the hope that they will get a chance to get on.

I am not afraid to say that there are 1500 unemployed citizens in Saskatoon. On one street in Saskatoon any hour of the day I could take you along about 12 blocks and pass somewhere around 500 unemployed, this you may not believe, but I am willing to back up my statement and prove it to you or to anyone else of influence.⁴⁴

The situation was aggravated by the fact that the traditional escape valve, the opportunity for farm labour, had been cut off.⁴⁵ By the summer of 1931 the conditions had become serious. In Saskatoon there was a real fear of trouble on June 1, 1931, as between seven and eight hundred unemployed milled about outside the City Council Chamber for three hours. The City Fathers tried to placate them with the promise of a new bridge whenever the provincial government came through with sufficient funds.⁴⁶ In Moose Jaw in the meantime, with "three thousand citizens totally destitute", the situation was described as "many times more severe than war" because "there are hundreds of married men blocking sidewalks today and serious trouble is imminent unless a proper relief policy is immediately made public."⁴⁷

By 1931 it was realized by all but the most naive that the depression was not a temporary thing. Thus, of necessity, the situation gradually sorted itself out for government authorities hard pressed to find a solution. For the single unemployed, the group most easily displaced, the initial reaction by the provincial government was to place them on farms. This was accomplished with federal assistance under the Unemployment and Farm Relief Act, 1931.⁴⁸ But this proved to be merely a stopgap measure as numbers increased. Many of this "lost generation" took to the road in search of work or a

warmer climate, but for those who stayed or drifted into the province work camps had to be established. Despite the prevalent opinion that relief was the responsibility of the municipality, the cities could not handle these men, so the provincial government took the initiative under the Saskatchewan Relief Commission and in August, 1931, camps were created at Saskatoon, Moose Jaw, and Regina to perform necessary tasks in return for board and room and a small remuneration.⁴⁹

While the views of the province and the men contrasted sharply as to the conditions in the camps, it can be generally conceded that the atmosphere was not particularly wholesome. With over a thousand men confined in a limited space (800 in Saskatoon, 180 in Moose Jaw and 150 in Regina as of May, 1933) sanitation was definitely a problem. The result was illness, but the most important effect was increasing discontent,⁵⁰ in turn creating an excellent environment for the efforts of agitators. Militancy brought confrontation with authorities at the Saskatoon camp in May, 1933, resulting in the death of an RCMP officer. Within two months the camps were closed, and the men transferred to a special camp erected at Dundurn by the federal government and administered under the Department of National Defence as part of a national programme begun in October, 1932, under federal order-in-council.

This was not the first experience of the federal government with single, able bodied, homeless unemployed in Saskatchewan. In November, 1930, a work camp opened in the Prince Albert National Park for the expressed purpose of expanding the park's facilities as well as providing needed work for the unemployed.⁵² In contrast to the provincial camps, the federal one seemed to be well administered and there was little discontent expressed outside of the usual grumbling,

although the DND's Dundurn camp had more problems.⁵³ More concern was expressed from outside sources, especially organized labour, upset not so much by the plight of the men as by the fact that public works were being carried on at twenty cents a day plus board instead of at union wages. In the opinion of the unions, "this is forced labor, and surely not british [sic] in principle."⁵⁴

Labour must have realized that by criticizing the federal relief policy in this manner it was flailing the wind. Its approach was unrealistic, and besides, the single unemployed, situated as they were in camps, were far beyond the pale of the urban organizations. For this reason, and because former trade unionists had families, thus keeping them close to the cities, labour paid more attention to the municipal relief systems as practised in the cities.

There were individual differences between the cities in the manner in which they administered relief. For example, Prince Albert was the only centre to exact work for relief,⁵⁵ although all of them must have considered at least a wood yard at one time or other.⁵⁶ However, of all the cities, Saskatoon had the worst situation, largely because its relief officer, G.W. Parker, was extremely strict and unbending in his enforcement of the regulations. What made the situation even worse was that in a city with a large eastern European population Parker was openly prejudiced against aliens.⁵⁷ But generally speaking, the main intention of all the province's cities was to try and keep the bodies and souls of bona fide citizens together through the provision of food, fuel, clothing, and shelter until the bread winner could find employment.

The following statistics on direct urban relief indicate the seriousness of the problem:

<u>Period</u>	<u>Individuals Assisted</u>
1930-31	20,211
1931-32	52,386
1932-33	46,394
1933-34	49,658
1934-35	56,070
1935-36	52,229*
1936-37	55,343

*figure includes provincial assistance given to 1,655 On-to-Ottawa Trekkers.⁵⁸

Even though the federal and provincial governments together absorbed two-thirds of the costs involved, the fact that relief costs for Saskatchewan cities had increased forty times between 1929 and 1933 meant a heavy burden to the civic administration, especially when added to the cost of administering the system.⁵⁹ Hence, inevitably the city fathers became niggardly, especially when the depression took its toll of the number of burgesses. To protect the minimal rights of the unemployed as human beings and to provide diversion in the face of boredom, a wide variety of organizations were formed, each tailored to the needs and interests of its members. For example, those who still had property in late 1932 in Saskatoon came together to form the Fraternal Protective Association of Unemployed Citizens and Tax Payers, to preserve the "sanctity of the home."⁶⁰ But it was only one of ten which had been formed by 1936.⁶¹ The same proliferation occurred in every city, and attempts to bring an element of unity to increase effectiveness, as with the formation of the Regina United Action Committee of Unemployed Associations in 1935, had little

success.⁶²

Early in the depression the main purpose of unemployed associations was to demonstrate against unemployment and to impress upon government that they did not want direct relief but useful work at current wages.⁶³ But by mid-decade their appeal was based on the day-to-day administration of the direct relief system.⁶⁴ In addition, more stress was placed on political action, especially at the municipal level where changes could be effected. Yet, while distress brought a realistic approach to problems, it also produced militancy as organizations of unemployed became prime targets for the appeal of Communist-sponsored, inspired or affiliated organizations. Under their leadership, which was motivated by a desire to bring about a confrontation with authorities, relief strikes took place in Yorkton in April, 1935, and in Prince Albert in March and April, 1936.⁶⁵ Both, however, ended in failure. But, by and large, the organizations of unemployed played an extremely useful part in guarding the rights of their members, and through public agitation improving the condition of the unemployed in small ways. In this regard, they took over the functions the trades councils had to give up due to declining influence in the community.

Although organized labour in Saskatchewan, functioning under the principle of international craft unionism, had lost much of its former influence and in fact was virtually extinct in many industries, there were competing organizations that looked to its weakened condition as an opportunity to woo the disgruntled and the straggler with appeals which ran contrary to the principles of the TLC movement. The least dangerous of these was the nationalist appeal of the Canadian Federation of Labour, primarily because it was economically

unrealistic for the province's unions.

Appeals to nationalism among Canada's organized labour bodies had been expressed since the turn of the century, but traditionally the appeal was negative, against the policies of the TLC and the international unions, rather than supported with a positive programme. The first organization to use the name Canadian Federation of Labour (CFL) grew out of the old National Trades and Labour Congress in 1908, but excluding the Knights of Labor. Shortly before World War I it managed to gain some strength among disgruntled unionists in the printing trades in Ontario, but its greatest increase in membership came in 1923. It joined with the Canadian Brotherhood of Railway Employees, the One Big Union and a few other unaffiliated unions in 1927 to form the All-Canadian Congress of Labour, but because of internal strife a handful of the affiliates broke away in 1936 to form a new CFL. It was this last organization that created the greatest threat to the TLC movement in Saskatchewan.

The appeal of the CFL was simple:

...in respect to the most important...sections of our citizenry, the workers, we are vassals. Not to a foreign state, but even worse than that, we are subject to control of groups of individuals located in another State who are not even responsible to that State. Of all democratic countries in which labour has a voice, and all the rest of the self-governing parts of the British Empire, Canada alone has no free national unified labour movement, except that represented by the Canadian Federation of Labour.⁶⁶

For these reasons it took every opportunity and used every device to insult and discredit the international movement.

The TLC movement in Canada was warned of the CFL's activities as early as 1922⁶⁷ but the warning had little significance in Saskatchewan. Any purely nationalist union activity prior to that

time had been insignificant.⁶⁸

The first real attempt by the nationalists to gain a foothold in Saskatchewan came in 1930 when the A-CCL established National Labour Councils in Regina and Saskatoon.⁶⁹ Using the depression to good advantage, the affiliates of these councils tried to convince employers that their members could staff an establishment with fewer men than a TLC union because "...we, as a Canadian Union, are more conversant with, and in a better position to view intelligently, the situation as it exists locally, than is an American Union whose dictates come from N.Y."⁷⁰ They also tried to convince government officials to take a more nationalistic position in their decisions in the light of the prevailing economic dislocation.⁷¹

The Federation that appeared in 1936 after breaking with the A-CCL was so intent on opposing the international unions and making gains at their expense that it was even willing to sacrifice the principles of unionism. Described by some as a "scab" organization allegedly financed by the CPR, it gained an immediate reputation as a management-sponsored organization used to oppose legitimate unions⁷² in a period when a legislative atmosphere conducive to organization was beginning to have its effect. Its organizers working in Saskatchewan, and especially one Mrs. Patton, were described as "very unscrupulous" and "willing to do duty work for a monetary consideration."⁷³ But whatever their motives, they managed to organize a Saskatoon council of the CFL in 1936, with three locals, containing sixty members. With this as a base the Federation made a concerted organization drive in the province during 1938. While most of their activity was centred on the coal mining region in the south-east

part of the province where the United Mine Workers were showing signs of interest, they did manage to organize a local at the Brewery's Brewery in Regina.⁷⁴ Here they ran headlong into an extremely alarmed Regina Trades and Labor Council which had as an affiliate local 318 of the International Union of United Brewery Flour, Cereal and Soft Drink Workers. But before the council could do anything a contract was signed. The only recourse the council had was to inform the company that its product would be boycotted throughout the province by all unionists affiliated with the AFL. In addition, it withdrew the brewery's advertisement from its yearbook.⁷⁵ A few on the council took some small satisfaction from being able to refuse affiliation when the Saskatchewan Brewery Workers' Union No. 1 (CFL) made an enquiry to that effect a few months later.⁷⁶

Although the Canadian Federation of Labour showed promise of posing a serious challenge to the established TLC movement in the province, the threat never materialized. A handful of locals were formed, such as the unit of the Amalgamated Building Workers of Canada in Saskatoon,⁷⁷ but the activities of the CFL were lost in the frenzied activity produced by the TLC and especially the CIO during the war. Not only did workers see the CFL for what it was beyond the nationalist smokescreen, but, more important, the Federation was unable to establish itself, for the same reasons that the OBU had failed twenty years before. While it was organized along craft lines, unlike the OBU, its organization, being merely national in scope, did not have the money or staff, even with the help of employers, to organize and satisfactorily service a handful of locals with only a handful of members scattered throughout the province in a few small cities.

A more sinister threat, because it thrived on the success of the TLC movement rather than its failure, and because its stand fluctuated sufficiently to confuse the unknowing, was the Communist Party of Canada and its affiliates. Within the Saskatchewan movement there had been traditionally a small minority who combined a belief in economic determinism with impatience with gradualism. While the organizations they supported were about as numerous as their members, most revolved around the Socialist Party of Canada. The First World War and the dislocation which resulted from it provided ears for their appeal. Events in Europe, and especially the October Revolution, convinced them that the workers' utopia was attainable and imminent. The events in the spring of 1919 seemed to support their beliefs, with the radical pronouncements made at the Calgary convention and the general rhetoric which was being disseminated. There was definitely a minority present at Calgary that believed that the One Big Union was to be a vehicle of the revolution. The Winnipeg General Strike and the initial reaction to it among labour throughout western Canada was for them the consummation.

As far as the radical left in Regina was concerned, where there is sufficient documentation because of the reports of infiltrating RNMWP officers, it seemed to be made up of two types of individuals. Some were dreaming fools, such as E.M. Mutch, who handed out copies of The Red Flag from his candy store. In his opinion the revolution was not far off:

I wish I was in Winnipeg. My God! I wish I was there. I would get a good red army of Reds like myself and run and shoot the Damn Red Coats of Police the same as they shoot

down the workers....If a revolution should start here in Regina I would be the leader for I can talk to people and understand things better than most of the workers today.⁷⁸

Fed by rumours concerning the revolution which seemed to be going on all over, especially in England, Mutch had great faith in the OBU. But his enthusiasm soon turned to disgust. On July 1, 1919, he observed

...my but it is coming very slowly but sure, and if these damned sleepy heads of workers would wake up in this damned country we would have a revolution here for sure.

But by mid-August he was disappointed to the extent that he approached Ralph Heseltine and "told him that hos [sic] One Big Union was no damn good...."⁷⁹

Of somewhat sounder mind was the alleged leader of the Regina "reds", Frank Johnson, who also ran a store. While his pronouncements were less boastful there was still initially the same belief that "...the One Big Union is what we want. This Trades and Labour Union [sic] is no good at all." But, like Mutch, his enthusiasm rapidly waned.

Well, I can't see how we can have a revolution now. I have been working for it and waiting for it to come for a year now and I tell you I have had just about enough of it. You know it is very hard on a man who is waiting for something to happen, and he is working hard all the time, and then something seems to keep putting it off all the time.⁸⁰

The TLC movement viewed the formation of the Communist Party in 1921 with the same vigilance and alarm as it had the One Big Union. The Congress immediately took the stand that the Party together with its ancillary bodies, the Workers' Party of Canada and the Workers' Educational League, were not established "to improve the usefulness of the trade unions, but, by first destroying confidence in the

methods established through years of experience, to utilize them to bring the workers of Canada under the control of the Red Trade Union International of Moscow." Toward this end the Congress recognized that "there are adherents to this movement who are merely here to use the machinery of the Congress to further their own red propaganda."⁸¹ Foreseeing the danger, the TLC made a concerted effort through the pages of the Canadian Congress Journal to bring the activities of the Workers' Party of Canada to the attention of unionists and forewarn them of its intentions. Further, to prevent incursions into the movement by the WPC the Congress tried to convince the AFL that an organizer was needed in western Canada.⁸²

In the next few years, CPC organizations received numerous indications that they were not wanted. The Congress adopted a policy in 1925 of non-participation in any activities sponsored by the Canadian Labor Defense League, no matter how just,⁸³ and later all affiliates were informed that the League was merely "another vehicle whereby the communists can undermine and misrepresent the real position of the trade union movement."⁸⁴ When the Mine Workers' Union of Canada sought affiliation with the Alberta Federation of Labour, the Federation was informed "that it would be contrary to the Constitution of the Congress to accept such an affiliation" and if the application was accepted the Federation would be suspended.⁸⁵ Then in late 1927 the Toronto Trades and Labor Council purged all Communists from its ranks.⁸⁶ Yet, in spite of such warning, men who were obviously members of the CPC and represented one of its affiliates mingled openly with the TLC organizations in Saskatchewan. Perhaps the apathy which was symptomatic of the decade was at fault,

but whatever the reason Tim Buck spoke to the Regina Trades and Labor Council on behalf of the Trade Union Educational League in December, 1922, and "was given a hearty vote of thanks for his interesting talk."⁸⁷ In June, 1923, H.N. Bartholemew, an outspoken member of the WPC, spoke to the Council on the benefits of a provincial federation and the council decided to act on his advice.⁸⁸ At the same time the local Ukrainian Labor Temple Association, a well-known Communist affiliate, was allowed to sit in on the deliberations of the council on the same basis as it did in Saskatoon, namely with a voice but no vote and with no initiation fee and no per capita.⁸⁹ At the 1923 TLC convention held in Vancouver in September, the Regina Trades and Labor Council was represented by Malcolm Bruce, a one-time member of the Carpenters and Joiners, who had joined the WPC in December, 1921,⁹⁰ and had gone on in 1922 to become editor of the party organ, The Worker in Toronto. As the Regina delegate he was by far the most prominent of the Saskatchewan delegation, becoming most conspicuous when he condemned a resolution advocating the abolition of war, stating that such resolutions were futile and that "the only effective way was the general strike."⁹¹ This sentiment was hardly expressive of the opinions of Regina labour, particularly at that time.

But the provincial mecca for the radical left was Saskatoon, with its large eastern European population. The WPC was active there as early as mid-1922, capitalizing on the depression that hit the province early in the decade.⁹² In February, 1924, the death of Lenin was observed in a suitably reverent ceremony in the Ukrainian Workers' Hall.⁹³

Also using the depression as a tool, the WPC was able to

cause a substantial stir in the TLC movement in Saskatoon in 1923. Having attained control of the direction of the city's Federal Labor Union, such men as Bartholemew and Walter Mill (who made a quick trip from the OBU, through the international movement and on to the Workers' Party) got representation on the Trades Council. Through their inspirational leadership the council, in conjunction with the WPC, held a May Day demonstration at the Empire Theatre at which the prominent unionist, W.E. Brunskill spoke at length about ending capitalist domination, war and unemployment through the establishment of a co-operative commonwealth. He was followed by Bartholemew who parroted Marxist slogans. The meeting apparently raised the ire of the Typographical Union and they confronted the delegates of the Federal Labor Union at the council's mid-May meeting and accused them of "being out to wreck the American Federation of Labor and the Dominion Trades Congress." But the long debate only accomplished the further straining of relations between the various delegates.

In July the situation erupted again when the delegates of the FLU accused the labour representative on City Council of being anti-labour because he had voted against an extension to the City Hospital, which was deemed necessary regardless of the cost. Lack of confidence was again expressed in the labour alderman in December, and it was decided that the council would not support a candidate for the 1923 elections. The meeting degenerated into a heated discussion between the alderman and the delegates from the Federal Labor Union over the lack of patriotic symbols in the Ukrainian Labor Temple.⁹⁴ Finally, the members of the CPC in Saskatoon were deemed to be a sufficient threat that the city council in October, 1925, adopted "the policy of

not hiring in the city service any person who is a member of the Communist Party", the first municipal body in the country to do so.⁹⁵

The advice and warnings issued by the international movement as to the activities of the CPC and its affiliates, registered with the movement in Saskatchewan during the thirties to the point that the crafts became almost paranoid, if the movement in Regina is any indication. One can only speculate on the reasons. Most obvious is the fact that the depression eliminated many of the unskilled concentrated in the service industries and organized within directly chartered locals of the Congress or the AFL. In addition, recent immigrants were the first to be displaced by the resultant economic dislocation. Hence, the Communists found their former avenue into the TLC movement cut off, as the trades councils were supported by only the most hard-core advocates of international craft union principles.

A more important event which had inevitable traumatic repercussions throughout the movement in the province was the arrest, trial, and conviction in 1931 of Canada's eight leading Communists under Section 98 of the Criminal Code. Of the eight, two had gained extensive experience in Saskatchewan. Malcolm Bruce had come to Regina in 1910 and immediately got involved with the carpenters and the local branch of the SPC, a route that led him through the OBU and on to the Communist Party in 1922, and eventually to the editorship of The Worker.⁹⁶

Tom Ewen's career ran almost parallel to that of Bruce. A member of the OBU and the SPC in British Columbia, he joined the CPC in Saskatoon in 1922. But under the auspices of the international

movement, as a member of the local trades council, he organized local 22 of the International Brotherhood of Blacksmiths, Drop Forgers and Helpers, and led a strike against Richardson Iron Works in 1925. In addition, he was instrumental in organizing local 176 of the Building Labourers and Hod Carriers. At the same time he edited the Farmers' Unity League organ, The Furrow, for a time. Late in the twenties he went on to become district organizer and then national secretary of the Workers' Unity League.⁹⁷

But more distressing to the Saskatchewan movement than the fear of repression, was the discovery that one of the prime witnesses for the prosecution of the eight in Toronto had walked among them for twelve years and had shared their most intimate secrets. Sergeant Leopold had infiltrated the movement in Regina shortly after the Calgary convention in March, 1919, as J.W. Esselwein, a disgruntled painter. He had witnessed the council's fight over the OBU and when the radicals broke away he worked his way into the leadership of the OBU's miscellaneous unit. When the heretics recanted and returned to the international fold, Esselwein did too, but he continued to identify himself with the radicals. In November, 1923, he became a delegate to the Trades Council, and because of the apathy that afflicted the movement his rise was meteoric. In January, 1924, he became vice-president of the council and in March he was elected chairman of the executive committee.⁹⁸ But he still continued to contribute an occasional article to The Worker.⁹⁹ After the discovery of his identity Saskatchewan unionists avoided anything that had the slightest taint of Communism. Possibly for this reason there was only one local of the Workers' Unity League in the province in 1934, despite widespread

activity of the League nationally.¹⁰⁰

When local Communists suggested a united front conference on May 24, 1933, to be attended by left wing and progressive forces against fascism and war, the Regina Trades Council delegated three men to attend but they were instructed to deal only with the threat of fascism and war and nothing else. After the conference was over the delegates recommended that no further part be taken in such activities, and the council remained adamant in spite of continued appeals from United Front advocates for support.¹⁰¹

In late June, 1935, the Regina council agreed to assist a citizens' committee established to help the relief camp workers on their way to Ottawa, but after the Regina Riot took place the support was withdrawn.¹⁰² When approached to attend the deliberations of the Citizens' Legal Defense Committee established to help raise money for the defense of those arrested, the council promptly refused, contending that "many fasces [sic] of the meeting were political, and did not come within the scope of the RT&LC."¹⁰³

Even though the threat of Communism to the country or to organized labour in Saskatchewan did not appear to be particularly ominous, the Regina council seriously considered joining the Citizens' League of B.C., an organization dedicated to the eradication of the Communist threat.¹⁰⁴ In actual fact, it was not until April, 1938, that the council came into immediate contact with the CPC. On this occasion it faced the question of censuring the president of the council, Alex Cochrane, for speaking at a meeting called by the Labour-Progressive Party. The position taken by the conservatives on the council for whom the veteran Harry Perry was a spokesman, was that the majority

of Regina unionists would have nothing to do with the party. For this reason "if any man should keep off the political platform it should be the president of the Trades and Labor Council."¹⁰⁵ The vote of censure passed by over a margin of two to one.

The council's position seemed justified when the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact was signed, and was soon followed by war in Europe. In fact, the situation was deemed serious enough to call for an amendment to the constitution and the insertion of the following resolution:

No delegate shall be given voice or vote on the Council who represents any dual organization, or who is a member of the Communist Party or any revolutionary organization. All delegates shall be asked to subscribe to a declaration that they are not or have any intention of becoming, while a delegate of the Council, a member of the Communist Party or any revolutionary organization. Any delegate who refuses to subscribe to such a declaration shall have his or her credentials revoked.

Forty-six delegates in all signed the pledge.¹⁰⁶

But to say that the Communists, or even the nationalists in the Canadian Federation of Labour, greatly weakened the craft union movement in Saskatchewan would be an error. It was already pared to the bare bones by economic conditions. Only the most devoted and the most secure could afford to adhere to the principle of unionism in the period up to 1937. After that date when conditions began to improve and significant gains were being made for the labour movement in other parts of the continent, the TLC movement remained weak in Saskatchewan because the industrial base, the nature of the work force, and the number of individuals involved did not justify it being placed on the short list for the expenditure of manpower and financial resources. This situation did not change until 1942, and even then the greatest gains were made by the Congress's competitor.

FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER IV

¹Sask. Dept. of Railways, Labour and Industries Reports, 1928-9, p. 11, 1929-30, p. 12, 1930-31, p. 41, 1931-2, p. 18.

²G.W.D. Abrams, Prince Albert: The First Century, (Saskatoon, 1966, p. 310).

³People's Weekly, Feb. 22, 1936.

⁴Canadian Trade Unionist, April 30, 1932.

⁵Regina Daily Post, July 16, 1929.

⁶Sask. Dept. of Labour file I 16(2), Thomas M. Molloy, Memo for file re: railway employees, May 2, 1933.

⁷The Leader-Post (Eve), Dec. 19, 1931.

⁸Bureau and Dept. of Labour Reports.

⁹RT&LC files, Financial Statement of H&REIA #816, Jan. 1938.

¹⁰Bureau of Labour Reports, 1936-7, p. 6 and 1937-8, p. 9.

¹¹RT&LC files, Statement of the Hotel & Restaurant Employees International Alliance to the Executive of the Trades and Labour [sic] Council, Regina, March 25, 1938.

¹²Ibid., A. Baker (MJT&LC secty) to Heseltine, Nov. 29, 1935.

¹³Ibid., Chairman Organizing Committee Report, Nov. 12, 1940.

¹⁴RT&LC Minutes, Aug. 24, 1936 meeting.

¹⁵Ibid., Aug. 22, 1938 meeting.

¹⁶Statistics from RLO, 1937, p. 23. For the problem of the allocation of organization funds see resolution from Regina Truckers' and Coal Haulers' Federal Union No. 110 in TLC Proceedings, 1937, p. 193.

¹⁷RT&LC files, Duncan Fisher to George Alley, May 21, 1935.

¹⁸P.W. Haffner interview, Jan. 14, 1970.

¹⁹RT&LC Minutes, March 12, 1934 meeting.

²⁰RT&LC files, RT&LC to Bennett, April 24, 1933.

²¹Ibid., RT&LC resolution June 24, 1934. Regina labour faced a bit of a dilemma in March, 1933, when the construction of a major natural gas pipeline was announced. On the one hand the project would provide 200,000 man days of new employment over a four or five year period thus saving the city half the cost of direct relief. On the other hand, some unionists opposed the scheme because it would be undertaken by private enterprise. Ibid., Report of McManus Gas Proposal Committee, March 9, 1933.

²²Bennett Papers, 489053, Regina Builders' Exchange to Bennett (telegram), Sept. 25, 1931.

²³Ibid., 489367-8, Dennis Shannon (Saskatoon Builders' Exchange) to Bennett, Oct. 17, 1933.

²⁴RT&LC files, RT&LC to Bennett, Feb. 7, 1935.

²⁵Leader Post, Aug. 8, 1931.

²⁶RT&LC Minutes, Feb. 13, 1933 meeting.

²⁷Bennett Papers, 488932-3, A.J.M. Wallace to Bennett, June 27, 1931.

²⁸RT&LC Minutes, May 26 & July 13, 1936 meetings.

²⁹TLC Executive Board Minutes, June 2, 1932 meeting.

³⁰Bennett Papers, 488823-4, M.C. Tomlinson to Bennett, June 10, 1931.

- ³¹Ibid., 265524-6, A.E. Miller to Bennett, Aug. 2, 1930.
- ³²Labour Gazette, Feb. 1935, pp. 151-4.
- ³³RT&LC Minutes, Dec. 10, 1934 meeting.
- ³⁴Leader Post, July 28, 1931.
- ³⁵RT&LC Minutes, Feb. 27, 1933 meeting.
- ³⁶RT&LC files, Heseltine to Mayor Aldermen, Aug. 13, 1935.
- ³⁷Leader Post, July 28, 1931.
- ³⁸RT&LC Minutes, Jan. 9, 1933 meeting.
- ³⁹Ibid., Sept. 23, 1934 meeting.
- ⁴⁰Ibid., June 12, 1933, Jan. 27 and Feb. 10, 1936 meetings.
- ⁴¹Ibid., Jan. 23, 1933, Feb. 13 and 25 and March 11, 1935 meeting.
- ⁴²Bureau of Labour Report, 1937-8, p. 11.
- ⁴³Bennett Papers, 488895-6, Fred P. Armstrong to Bennett, Nov. 27, 1930.
- ⁴⁴Ibid., 488842-5, Dudley Hensleigh to Bennett, May 15, 1931.
- ⁴⁵Ibid., 488816-7, T.A. Clark to Bennett, June 16, 1931.
- ⁴⁶Ibid., 488833, M.C. Tomlinson to Bennett, June 4, 1931 and 489058-9, J.W. Hair to M.A. Macpherson, (telegram), n.d., 1931.
- ⁴⁷Ibid., 488849, F.G. Turner and L. Cambell to W.A. Beynon (telegram), April 27, 1931.

⁴⁸The Labour Gazette, Jan. 1932, p. 52.

⁴⁹Alma Lawton, "Urban Relief in Saskatchewan During the Years of Depression, 1930-39, Unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, 1969, p. 52.

⁵⁰Canadian Labor Defender, Aug. 1933.

⁵¹Leader Post, May 13, 1933 and Lawton op. cit., p. 131. Lorne A. Brown in his article "Unemployment Relief camps in Saskatchewan, 1933-1936", Sask. History, Vol. XXIII, No. 3, Autumn, 1970, pp. 81-104 provides an excellent discussion of the problem.

⁵²Bennett Papers, 488873, clipping from The Saskatoon Star-Phoenix, Feb. 9, 1931.

⁵³Ibid.; OBU Bulletin, Jan. 12 and Aug. 24, 1933 and Dec. 29, 1932; Lorne A. Brown, op. cit.

⁵⁴RT&LC Minutes, July 10, 1933 meeting. See also Bennett Papers, 488954, E.L. Delmage to Bennett, July 6, 1931, and 488974, J.M. Toothill (secty-treas. Regina National Labour Council (A-CCL) to Bennett, July 18, 1931; Leader Post, July 4, 1931.

⁵⁵A. Lawton, op. cit., p. 67.

⁵⁶Leader Post, July 3, 1931.

⁵⁷A. Lawton, op. cit., pp. 112-7.

⁵⁸Sask. Dept. of Labour files, I 10(2) Memo-Direct Relief-Urban.

⁵⁹A. Lawton, op. cit., pp. 43-4.

⁶⁰Bennett Papers, 489319-21, P.C. Sketcher to Bennett, (telegram), Nov. 13, 1932.

⁶¹These included the following: Ex-Service Men's Welfare Association, Single Men's Association for the Physically Unfit, Single Workers' Union, Married Transient Relief Association, Transient Relief Association, Disabled Veterans' Association, Transient Emergency Association, National Transient Union and the local branch of the Saskatchewan Union of Unemployed, A. Lawton, op. cit., pp. 109-10.

⁶²RT&LC files, Constitution of United Action Committee, May 10, 1935.

⁶³The Weekly News, July 12, 1929 and Bennett Papers, 489068, Saskatoon local Unemployed Association to Bennett (telegram), Nov. 3, 1931.

⁶⁴See SA Pamphlet file, The S.U.U. (organ of the Saskatoon Union of Unemployed), May 7, 1935.

⁶⁵SA, CCF Association Sask. Papers, file: "UFC(SS) 1934-37", G.H. Williams to J.F. Herman, April 10, 1935, A. Lawton; op. cit., pp. 92-100; G.W.D. Abrams, op. cit., pp. 323-4.

⁶⁶Canadian Labour Herald, April, 1938.

⁶⁷TLC Executive Board Minutes, Jan. 11-13, 1922 meeting.

⁶⁸There had been the Saskatchewan Brotherhood of Steam and Operating Engineers, formed in Regina in 1914, and a local of the National Plasterers' Association (CFL) in the same city in December, 1913. Labour Gazette, 1913-14, p. 781 and RLO, 1929 p. 40.

⁶⁹RLO, 1930, pp. 77, 79.

⁷⁰Alberta Labor News, Feb. 13, 1932.

⁷¹Bennett Papers, 265677-8 and 265683, Louis A. Braner and J. Sutherland to Bennett, Feb. 5 and 10, 1931.

⁷²CCF Records, MG 28, IV-1, V. 67, David Lewis to T. C. Douglas, Oct. 6, 1942; TLC Proceedings, 1938, p. 191.

⁷³RT&LC files, M.J. Fenwick to Chambers, Oct. 15, 1938, Nick Argyros (Secty Restaurant Employees, Toronto) to Chambers, Oct. 15, 1938.

⁷⁴RLO, 1937, p. 154.

⁷⁵RT&LC Minutes, April 30 and May 4, 1938 executive meetings.

⁷⁶Ibid., Sept. 12, 1938 meeting.

⁷⁷Canadian Labour Herald, Aug. 1940.

⁷⁸RCMP files, RG 18, B-5, Vol. 60, Ryan report, June 23, 1919.

⁷⁹Ibid., Ryan Report, Aug. 16, 1919.

⁸⁰Ibid., Ryan Report, July 17, 1919.

⁸¹TLC Proceedings, 1922, pp. 163-4, 114.

⁸²TLC Executive Board Minutes, Jan. 21, 1923 meeting.

⁸³Ibid., Dec. 11-12, 1925 meeting.

⁸⁴Ibid., Jan. 7, 1928 meeting.

⁸⁵Ibid., Oct. 15, 1926 meeting.

⁸⁶Ibid., Jan. 7, 1928 meeting.

⁸⁷RT&LC minutes, Dec. 11, 1922 meeting.

⁸⁸Ibid., June 25, 1923 meeting.

⁸⁹Ibid., May 14, 1923 meeting.

⁹⁰William Rodney, Soldiers of the International (Toronto: 1968), p. 67.

⁹¹TLC Proceedings, 1923, p. 115; The Progressive, Sept. 20, 1923.

⁹²The Worker, Aug. 15, 1922.

⁹³Ibid., Feb. 23, 1924.

⁹⁴Ibid., May 1, 16 and 30, July 4 and Dec. 22, 1923.

⁹⁵RLO, 1925, p. 163.

⁹⁶See William Rodney, op. cit., p. 162 for a brief biography.

⁹⁷Ibid., p. 148; Canadian Labor Defender, Dec., 1935.

⁹⁸RT&LC Minutes, Nov. 26, 1923, Jan. 28, 1924 meetings.

⁹⁹E.g. See April 25, 1923.

¹⁰⁰RLO, 1934, pp. 138-42.

¹⁰¹RT&LC Minutes, May 22, June 12 and July 10, 1933 meetings.

¹⁰²Ibid., June 24 and July 8, 1935 meetings.

¹⁰³RT&LC files, J. Hickling to George Black, Nov. 6, 1935.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., Heseltine to Citizens' League of B.C., July 20, 1935.

¹⁰⁵Sask. Dept. of Labour File I 16(1), Clipping from Leader Post, April 13, 1938.

¹⁰⁶RT&LC minutes, Dec. 11, 1939. These signatures are at the back of the minutes for 1940.

CHAPTER V

A PLACE FAR REMOVED: ORGANIZED LABOUR IN SASKATCHEWAN'S LIGNITE COAL FIELDS, 1905-1945

On September 29, 1969 W.G. Davies, the Executive Secretary of the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour, speaking at a rally on behalf of striking hospital workers in Estevan, made long and repeated references to an incident which occurred on an earlier September 29, in 1931 when three unfortunate immigrant miners were shot during a demonstration in downtown Estevan. In Davies' estimation

it is ...fitting for us to pay tribute to the memory of these three unionists and to recognize that the dispute between the mine operators and the miners of 1931 did serve in the end to assist the long and arduous struggle of Labour to achieve basic rights of organization, collective bargaining and a measure of social justice for working people.¹

At about the same time the journal of the Communications Workers of America in Saskatchewan featured the reprint of an article on "The Estevan Massacre" by one of the protagonists, Annie Buller.² But alas, the efforts by the contemporary movement in Saskatchewan to create a martyrology for itself have little basis in fact. The men working in the lignite mines in the extreme south-eastern corner of the province were isolated in every sense of the word.

The area was the only significant one where concentrations of manpower were employed in an extractive industry, thus isolating them by occupation from the rest of the province, both rural and urban. The conditions under which they laboured were completely

different from, and substantially more severe than, the rest of the province's work force. The same applied to the living conditions--housing, sanitation, and the general amenities of civilization, which at best were still far worse than those in the cities. Add to this the soul-destroying desolation which characterized the area. Hence, like their mining counterparts elsewhere, they adopted radicalism out of sheer necessity. Violence was the other alternative and it was resorted to on occasion and much more often than by unionists in the cities. It was second nature to flail out at forces they could not control, one of these being technological change, which in most areas would have meant an improvement in conditions, but in the Estevan-Bienfait area it meant a radical depletion of the work force, which really had nowhere else to go.

Operating as it did under different conditions and under different premises as to the value of human labour and life, the labour movement that developed there could in no way be compared with that which operated among the crafts in the cities. When attempts were made by the former to seek liaison or even assistance, the reaction was silence from most of the TLC movement in the province.

Substantial deposits of lignite had been noticed at Souris River in 1857 by Sir James Hector of the Palliser expedition. Dr. G.M. Dawson prepared a report on the same deposits in 1875 in connection with the International Boundary Commission. The first detailed report was made in 1909 by D.B. Dowling for the federal Department of Mines. But by that time a number of operators, major and minor, were developing the resource in an intensive manner.

The first commercial production came in 1880 when Hugh Sutherland

shipped a barge load of lignite down the Souris to Winnipeg, for which he received \$40.00. Seven years later H.H. Hassard mined drift coal on the sides of the hills at Coalfields (later Taylorton), most of which was picked up by local farmers.³ But after the granting of provincial status in 1905, the provincial government tried to promote the coal mining industry (and any other) in order to supplement the agricultural basis of the province. The size of the coal field was reported to be 6,188 square miles with an estimated 3,720,000,000 tons for every foot of thickness. But in the area of Estevan, Bienfait, Taylorton, Roche Percée, and Shand the field was deemed to be the most potentially productive, with deposits of from twenty-five to a hundred feet.⁴ The problem was that the coal mined was lignite, of poor quality, because of the high moisture content, which made it difficult to store, because it crumbled quickly. Yet the hope was that it could displace better quality Alberta coal as a domestic fuel in Manitoba and southern Saskatchewan, because the Alberta product was hampered by high freight rates.⁵

Impetus to this kind of thinking was provided by the severe coal shortage that hit the prairies in the winters of 1905-6 and 1906-7, due to labour trouble in the areas traditionally depended on to supply the prairie market. The provincial government tried to develop its own mines on a limited scale⁶ but by and large the province depended on private enterprise in the coal fields to supply coal to the treeless prairies, especially during those two bad winters.⁷ The coal famine provided incentive for the province to go to great and varied lengths in subsequent years to make the area produce a product competitive with richer deposits elsewhere. For this reason

in 1912 the province appointed R.O. Wynne-Roberts, a noted mining inspector, to inquire "into the Practicability of producing Power at Coal Centres and distributing it throughout the Province."⁸ After providing close to 150 pages of technical data and diagrams, Wynne-Roberts concluded that production and distribution of power from the coal centres was indeed feasible. But nothing was done about the report's recommendations for a number of years.

Although the provincial government was concerned with production figures, as evidenced by the annual reports of the Bureau of Labour, as far as other matters were concerned its policy seemed to be one of studied neglect. Until July 1, 1916, the exact number of mines in the province was unknown. The Mines Inspector knew that many of the smaller operations had never been inspected. One doubts whether he really cared, since he resided in Edmonton until mid-1916.⁹

By reason of neglect, it was almost inevitable that the miners and labourers working above and below ground in the area should seek organization. Late in 1907 the United Mine Workers of America made a concerted attempt to channel growing discontent over long hours and low wages into gains for the union. In mid-December, 1907, local 2672 was formed in Roche Percée and in January, 1908, it was followed by local 2682 in Estevan and 2648 in Roche Percee and Taylorton.¹⁰ But then came the problem of recognition. The Taylors, owners of the Western Dominion Collieries and the town that bore their name, summarily dismissed all men known to have joined the union. In the meantime, the Vice-President of District 18 of the UMWA, John R. Galvin, was ordered off the property of the Manitoba and Saskatchewan

Coal Company at Bienfait. The president of the company, the influential Senator Robert Watson, stated in defense of his action that "he proposed to hire who [sic] he pleased, and pay what wages he like and sell his coal at what prices he wished, and anyone that did not like his way of doing business could go to ____." ¹¹

At stake for the ninety men at Western Dominion and the fifty at the Manitoba and Saskatchewan mine were the recognition of the UMWA as bargaining agents, an eight hour day, and the standard wages of District 18 "as now prevailing in lignite fields of Southern Alberta." For these they struck. When the companies refused to negotiate, the union applied to the federal Department of Labour on March 16, 1908, for two Boards of Conciliation under the Industrial Disputes Investigation Act, 1907, to settle the disputes.

The two Boards had the same representative of the union, a Mr. R.H. Sherman of Taber, Alberta, and for this reason a joint session was held in Bienfait late in April. But a joint agreement was found to be impossible and the boards proceeded separately. The one dealing with the Western Dominion company had a relatively easy time of it, and after several sessions an agreement was reached on May 1, granting the men recognition of the union, the checkoff, parity with southern Alberta lignite fields, and the eight hour day for underground men except in rush periods. ¹²

In comparison, the refusal of the Manitoba and Saskatchewan company and Senator Watson to be intimidated by a mere union persisted. The deliberations of the board continued for some time, but without effecting an agreement. Finally, early in December, a majority report by the representative of the company and the chairman, and a

minority report by the union's representative, were presented to the Department of Labour. The majority opinion recommended the same wages as at the Roche Percée and Taylorton mines but it could not see its way clear to recommend the eight hour day because of the unsuitability of the coal for storing, thus necessitating "some elasticity" in the matter of hours. It expressed no opinion on union recognition, thus killing the attempt by the UMWA to organize the mine.¹³ Having thus failed to organize both of the largest operators at the same time, the union men at Western Dominion were at a disadvantage. The remaining locals of the UMWA were forced to dissolve in 1909, thus ending labour activity in the coal fields for a dozen years.¹⁴

The needs of a wartime economy placed additional pressure on the coal resources in south-eastern Saskatchewan and greater productivity enhanced the prosperity of the area to a degree. But soon the same malaise which struck most workers in western Canada, and which was in fact more serious because the men lacked organization, began to take its toll. Wages were not keeping up with the cost of living in an inflated wartime economy. Finally, in exasperation and without benefit of organization, the men struck the Manitoba and Saskatchewan mine in Bienfait late in October, 1916. They were followed on November 2nd by ~~eighty~~ - nine men at the Western Dominion Collieries at Taylorton. Both groups returned to work before November was a week old, the men at Bienfait having gained an increase of five cents a ton and a promise of five cents more later, and those on contract at Taylorton receiving a flat ten cents a ton increase and those employed on day labour got a pay hike of two and one half cents.¹⁵

But within a year the men were out again at both mines, this

time demanding a twenty percent increase in wages. As an indication of the odds against the men, the dispute which began on July 5, 1917, had to be settled by the intervention of the provincial police. Twenty-seven miners, presumably those considered leaders, were arrested for unlawfully going on strike contrary to sections 56 and 67 of the IDIA, locked in a shed by force of arms under the watchful eye of the local magistrate brought in by the company, and held for trial.¹⁶ For these unfortunates the reward took the form of fines and dismissals and an order to return to work.¹⁷

One suspects that the reason the situation in the Saskatchewan coal fields was handled with such dispatch was the serious labour troubles in the Fernie, Blairmore, Frank, Crow's Nest Pass area in late 1916 and 1917. Not only did this place a strain on the soft coal production in Saskatchewan to supply the domestic needs on the treeless prairies, but also authorities wanted to curtail these overt expressions of discontent before permanent damage was done to wartime production.¹⁸

But while expressions of frustration with the status quo were muffled, they could not be permanently silenced. A possible means of focussing it again came from Saskatchewan's sister province. The most universally enthusiastic rejection of the principles of the international movement and the wholesale acceptance of the One Big Union industrial concept occurred in what had been District 18 of the United Mine Workers of America. On August 1, 1919, at a joint meeting of the District board and the policy committee, the whole area went over to the OBU and its UMWA charter was immediately revoked.¹⁹ Then, as if inspired by a messianic urge to carry the industrial gospel

to all workers, the former president of District 18, Philip Martin Christophers, set out on an extended organization drive through Alberta and Saskatchewan. In Drumheller in August, 1919, he and a number of associates were the objects of intimidation by local citizens and they were threatened with hanging and finally run out of town at the point of a gun.²⁰

While Christophers' experiences at organizing the crafts in other prairie centres were somewhat more civilized, they were no more successful and he was followed and constantly harassed by organizers of the international movement.²¹ Then, on the instructions of the OBU headquarters, he proceeded to the mine fields of south eastern Saskatchewan at the beginning of July, 1920. He found the situation there "outrageous" and approaching "slavery". Besides the lack of competent checkweighmen to give the miners due reward for their work, Christophers reported the following observations:

The men are in some cases paid as low as forty cents per hour and work ten, twelve, and in some cases as much as fourteen hours per day. The mine boarding houses and stores are all run by the companies and all houses in which the married couples live are company houses. The rents and board, as well as the prices in the stores, are the highest in the district. The miners claim that they have no recourse except to deal at the store of the company by which they are employed as they are told that these stores are kept open for the benefit of the workers and the cost will be borne by them whether they patronise the stores or not.

The houses in which the families live are mere huts and absolutely no provision is made for sanitation, this being left altogether in the hands of the tenants. As far as living conditions are concerned Drumheller Valley in its worst days was a paradise compared to these camps.

The majority of the miners are Galicians who are still kept ignorant of the fact that internment camps are a thing of the past and are generally given to understand that war conditions still prevail, the few English speaking men employed are there because they find it impossible to get together the means to get out.²²

For these reasons, on July 3 Christophers called the men from the Western Dominion Collieries together at a private pool hall in Taylorton, but the company officials drove them off, so he invited the men to meet in Bienfait, five miles away, the next day. However, when the men came together Christophers could not address them. At midnight his sleep in the King Edward Hotel in Bienfait was interrupted by a local vigilante committee which forced him into a car and drove him across the border to Noonan, North Dakota. There he was told that if he returned to Canada he would be tarred and feathered. On the 5th he walked back across the border and returned to his native Blairmore.²³

It is difficult to establish where the order came from for the kidnapping of Christophers. He had been under surveillance by the RNWMP as early as February, 1919, showing that the authorities considered him dangerous.²⁴ When the mine operators had expressed concern to the Premier about the increased tension evident in the area before July 3, they were assured that if anything developed it would be handled by the Mounted Police.²⁵ While the provincial police had no official instructions in regard to the matter, one of his abductors was at the time a corporal in the force and he had told the OBU organizer that he was being removed by police authorities because "we had to do it to get you away from the crowd."²⁶

The next day, while Christophers was making his way back to the border, thirty-four men from the Taylorton mine and four from the Crescent mine were fired and told to vacate their houses, some of which they themselves owned but which were on company property. The rest were threatened with ten dollar per day rents and with a refusal of

credit at the company store.²⁷

Some of the men refused to be intimidated, and on the night of the fifth shots were fired at the home of the manager of Western Dominion. All the companies in the area immediately demanded protection from the provincial government.²⁸ Both RCMP and provincial police were sent in and four policemen were stationed at each mine.²⁹ This action, plus that of the vigilante committee, effectively killed unionism in the area for another decade. After the situation had cooled down somewhat, a lawyer working on behalf of the OBU tried to negotiate the return of the men dismissed early in July, and he was largely successful as the company desired their return, but the way was blocked by a group of English miners who feared possible displacement by foreigners and further trouble from agitators, giving a taste of things to come.³⁰

Possibly one reason why peace was imposed on the coal mining area of south-eastern Saskatchewan, besides the fact that everyone feared the OBU, was the keen interest that the two senior governments were showing in the area. Its value in wartime has been alluded to. From this time on the provincial government began to keep accurate records. Then, towards the end of the war, it became increasingly difficult to procure adequate supplies of anthracite from the United States, thus necessitating the discovery of a substitute. In 1918 the Lignite Utilization Board was established under joint federal and provincial (Manitoba and Saskatchewan) control, and under its auspices tests, were carried out on the briquetting of Saskatchewan lignite.

The Board was optimistic about the results of the tests, which demonstrated that two tons of lignite could be made into one ton of

briquettes, and on this basis construction began in 1920 on a plant for this purpose, to be located near Bienfait which was to have an expected capacity of 30,000 tons of briquettes per year. From the beginning of construction there were rumours of political string-pulling. On his visit to the area Christophers reported:

One of the mines belongs to the Hon. Senator Watson. The mine tibble was burnt down some time ago and has not yet been repaired and in consequence the mine is at present not producing coal. Notwithstanding the fact the new briquette plant being built by the Dominion is being erected close to the Hon. Senators [sic] mine.

We were told that a contract had been made by which the mine in which the Senator holds the controlling interest is to supply the briquette plant with one hundred tons of slack coal per day. We could not, of course, vouch for the truth of this story but it does not seem unreasonable as there is a rather limited market for lignite slacks especially such a poor quality as obtains in this district. One thing, however, may be seen by even the most casual observer and that is, that the briquette plant is so situated that the switching charges from the mine controlled by the Hon. Senator to the briquette plant will be far less than those of the other mines in the neighbourhood.³¹

But whatever the reason, after five years of unsuccessful operation the Board resigned in 1924 and a new one was appointed. The new Board, seeing that still more money was needed to make the plant operational, decided to cut its losses and sold the plant to Western Dominion.³²

But while the attempt to prove that briquette production was feasible failed, the Board did inject some money and optimism into the coal mining area, and this must have persisted through the latter half of the twenties, because little is heard from the region. But optimism did not necessarily bring better conditions or wages. Instead, there was a gradual shift in the ethnic balance of the area from that which existed prior to the war. The miners who had originally settled in

the lignite fields were skilled men from the British Isles who had taken the trouble to obtain licenses from the provincial government.³³ Many of them probably enlisted to defend the Empire, and they were replaced by recent immigrants, usually grouped under the title of Galicians. These men were the ones to whom the OBU had the greatest appeal. The provincial government expressed some hope that the large number of "foreigners" would be replaced after the war,³⁴ but from the point of view of the operators this was undesirable because the "foreigners" would accept poorer conditions and lower wages. For these same reasons those of British stock moved out if they could. The following statistics from the 1921 and 1931 censuses for Saskatchewan division No. 1 indicate this trend:

	TOTAL	ENGLISH	IRISH	SCOTCH	POLISH	RUSSIAN	UKRAINIAN
Whole of Census Division #1							
1921	35,297	11,900	5,803	6,055	237	971	156
1931	41,544	11,421	6,818	6,943	606	1,438	785
Estevan							
1921	1,742	408	175	176	13	83	1
1931	2,261	380	199	174	54	181	150
Coalfields							
1921	1,673	481	126	225	23	53	77
1931	1,974	445	149	230	90	49	237
Bienfait							
1921	260	72	53	37	1	4	19
1931	528	145	47	61	24	-	139
Roche Percée							
1921	99	36	3	25	-	-	1
1931	67	26	5	10	3	-	2

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While the "Galician" population was more docile on such issues as low wages, long hours and poor conditions, they were much more susceptible to the appeal of individuals from Communist party affiliates who spoke

to them in terms they understood in their own language. As early as 1924 Communists began to gain influence in the area, having taken over control of the Ukrainian Library at Bienfait.³⁶ But it took the depression and the resultant dislocation to make the appeal widespread.

The conditions were appalling for twentieth century Canada and were in ways reminiscent of the mines in Idaho and Colorado at the turn of the century--low wages, poor mine ventilation, cramped and inadequate housing on company property, and the proverbial company store.³⁷

Unable to sell coal competitively, the company cut prices and wages, adding greatly to the general insecurity. Another cut was rumoured for the fall of 1931.³⁸ Then in 1930 the first large strip-ping shovel in the region began operating at the Truax-Traer mine and because of the gargantuan machine the shadow of redundancy hung over all heads. In desperation, the men sought organization, and in response an organizer from the Mine Workers' Union of Canada, in the person of M.J. Forkin entered the field. In late August, 1931, he organized fifty men at the Crescent Mine and led them in a successful six day strike over the dismissal of one of the men.³⁹ After the strike Forkin was joined by Sam Scarlett and James Sloan, the president of the MWUC. Together they organized a branch of the Lumber and Agricultural Industries Union, an "aggressively revolutionary" affiliate of the Red International of Labour Unions, at the International Clay Products plant in Estevan, and demanded recognition before discussion could take place.⁴⁰ They also continued to work among the miners who were their particular interest.

These coal fields had been UMWA territory. Then the OBU had taken over. When it collapsed, the Communist-dominated Mine Workers'

Union of Canada filled the vacuum. It had been formally organized at a convention in September-October, 1925.⁴¹ Its active intervention in the economic life of Saskatchewan's lignite fields coincided with similar frenzied activity in the Alberta coal towns of Robb and Blairmore and those in the Crow's Nest Pass.⁴² There were, of course, far fewer members to be gained in Saskatchewan, but the propaganda value of winning Saskatchewan proved significant.

Whether this was the union's original aim is hard to say, but the miners became increasingly receptive to the work of Sloan and Scarlett on their behalf. By late August a union with 600 members had been formed for the entire field and a list of demands drawn up.⁴³ Anticipating trouble when some of the operators tried to bring in strike-breakers, the secretary-treasurer of the Village of Bienfait summoned T.M. Molloy on August 27, and he arrived in Estevan on September 3. Over the next few days he made a point of meeting with both the new union and the operators. In essence, what Molloy discovered in that time was that the operators were willing to meet representatives of the union provided that the delegation was made up solely of men from the area. The union's position was that they would not divulge their terms of settlement until such time as they met with all the operators at once and the latter had first agreed to recognize the union. Also, Sloan would at all times represent the men. Even though the provincial ministers of Public Works and Railways, Labour and Industries offered their good offices, the men decided to strike on September 8.

It appears that the MWUC organizers had not informed the men that their strike had violated the IDIA because it had not been first submitted for conciliation. Having brought this to Sloan's

attention, Molloy communicated with the federal Department of Labour, which sent out its chief conciliation officer. Before he arrived on the 21st, the provincial government tried to establish a voluntary board, but the union refused to co-operate. Then, by joint federal and provincial order Judge Edmund R. Wylie was appointed on the 19th to investigate conditions in the lignite fields.

Chief Conciliation Officer Campbell, knowing that the IDIA could only operate when the men were working, tried to negotiate a settlement. As a result the hearings of the Wylie Commission were held in abeyance.⁴⁴ The operators made some concessions but the union refused to listen so Wylie proceeded with his enquiry on September 29. In the meantime, the union had planned a parade through Estevan but was refused permission by civic authorities. The demonstration was held anyway, closely watched by police. A slip of some sort was made, and the real instigator of the ensuing riot will probably never be known. The following report of T.S. Belcher, the RCMP Assistant Commissioner, to the Prime Minister, while providing one side of the story, also indicates the drama of the moment.

Strike at Estevan 500 strikers marched on town of Estevan at 2 p.m. carrying red flag armed with clubs. Mayor of Estevan requested our assistance and issued proclamation prohibiting parade through town also holding meetings. Chief Constable of Estevan met parade at outskirts of town and advised leaders of proclamation. Two strikers attacked Chief rendering him unconscious and rushed our men 24 of whom were present. Hand to hand fighting ensued and some of the strikers opened fire. Our men retaliated resulting in three strikers being killed and some wounded. Eight of our men are badly injured. Ten rioters have been arrested and riot quelled. Approximately \$60,000 damage in town of Estevan caused by rioters. Estevan fire fighting equipment entirely destroyed by them. In case recurrence have dispatched 40 men fully equipped from depot by special car tonight also Police Surgeon.⁴⁵

The situation was sufficiently serious to warrant a provincial

government request to military authorities to place the militia on alert.⁴⁶

Despite the loss of life, however, the fracas in downtown Estevan created a more conciliatory atmosphere. Then, after Deputy Minister Molloy informed the men on October 5 that their organization was a Communist affiliate (despite contentions to the contrary by the organizers), they met with the operators the next day and an agreement was reached. The terms, which were temporary, pending the findings of the Wylie Commission, dealt primarily with working conditions and hours, but the operators also agreed not to discriminate against any man on account of the strike.⁴⁷ At a mass meeting on the 7th the men ratified the agreement by an overwhelming majority and returned to work.

In the meantime, the Royal Commission was gathering evidence and testimony by the volume. Much of it was technical but a great deal of it also provided a vivid portrait of the pathetic conditions under which men lived and laboured to eke out an existence.⁴⁸ But the real indication of a need for haste by the Commissioners to reach some conclusions was provided by the fact that the MWUC refused to lie down and die, despite the arrest of the organizers. More men were sent in from the Alberta fields,⁴⁹ and under their inspiration between sixty and seventy men walked out at a mine near Bienfait late in January, 1932, for a closed shop. When this was granted they returned to work.⁵⁰ In the meantime, men at another mine walked out in sympathy and they refused to return to work until "scabs" who had stayed on the job were dismissed, a demand which the operator refused to accept. Finally, on February 8 the men went back to work. Then, on the 22nd

fifty men at the Crescent Collieries, also of Bienfait, walked out over the dismissal of their appointed checkweighman. At issue was whether this man had to be an employee of the company under the tentative agreement of October 20, 1931. The manager immediately had five of the leaders arrested for violating the IDIA by not applying for a board before walking out. In sympathy, 150 men from neighbouring mines struck, but they returned when Molloy intervened and the men were released on bail. The men at the Crescent mine, however, refused to return until after the trial. In the meantime, the manager was arrested for allegedly violating the provincial Mines Act by removing the checkweighman. In the trials that followed, the five strike leaders were fined \$20.00 each and the charges against the manager were dismissed. Many of the strikers straggled back to work and the others were replaced.⁵¹

To some extent the report, when it appeared, must have eased the situation somewhat. Wylie concluded, on the one hand, that the MWUC, by its affiliation with the Workers' Unity League, was in fact a revolutionary industrial body pledged to the overthrow of capitalism and as such could not have been recognized by the operators. However, he recognized the fact that there were justifiable reasons for the industrial unrest, including the seasonal and fluctuating nature of the industry, the threat posed by the stripping operation, the wage reductions during 1930 and 1931, the poor working and living conditions and the absence of a satisfactory grievance procedure at the mines.

To remedy the situation, the Wylie Report recommended better government inspection, especially of ventilation equipment, better living conditions but with due consideration for the financial situation of the operators, and hours of work and method of

payment to conform with other Canadian mine fields. For the sake of the industry in the area Wylie recommended amalgamation of the smaller operations, a situation which he felt would be forced on the industry as a matter of course especially if the situation did not improve. In fact,

the most practical, permanent solution of the problem facing this industry at the present time, is to be found in the possibility of a greatly increased market for Saskatchewan lignite coal, resulting in a larger output in all the mines.⁵²

Resulting from the recommendations of the Wylie Commission, The Mines Act was amended to The Coal Mines Safety and Welfare Act, which came into force on November 1, 1932. It tightened up the qualifications of managers, pit bosses and miners; imposed stricter safety regulations; provided for closer scrutiny of weighing procedures; established an eight hour day except in cases of emergency; and provided for bi-weekly for all men making Less than \$2,000 a year.⁵³ It also provided for a grievance procedure, whereby a representative committee of the miners could make application to the provincial department of labour for an investigation if there was dissatisfaction with wages, where the wages were based on the weight of the mineral. In 1934 the miners in the southern Saskatchewan coal field requested a further investigation into the conditions of their trade. A Royal Commission with Mr. Justice W.F.A. Turgeon as commissioner was established, with sweeping powers to look into all aspects of the industry.⁵⁴

The conditions that Turgeon discovered in regard to unfair methods of competition, price-cutting, wages and working conditions, hours of labour and collective bargaining must have given the provincial

government pause, because it acted even before the report was presented. The Coal Mining Industry Act (1935) recognized the problems of the area as special, and accordingly transferred authority from the Department of Municipal Affairs (where it had resided under the Coal Mines Safety and Welfare Act) to the Department of Natural Resources. With a view to stabilizing the industry and ending practises detrimental to it, the new legislation, borrowing perhaps from the American NIRA, provided for licensing all operators and established codes and standards for the industry, fixing minimum prices and wages and maximum working hours.⁵⁵

Perhaps as a result of the new legislation, many of the 200 mines in operation were closed down.⁵⁶ Also, an increase in wages was granted to the miners and the companies were compensated by an arrangement fixing the price of coal for delivery in the province at a figure which would offset the increase. But such acts by the government, motivated as they were by a sincere desire to alleviate the conditions of the miners, could only be temporary measures. The lines between the operators and the workers were too firmly drawn. The antipathies and suspicions had been the essence of the relationship for too long. Both sides needed little justification to strike out against each other. For example, in November, 1937, a worker from Bienfait who claimed he was sick left his workplace without providing the proper props, and the roof collapsed. He was summarily dismissed. Feeling that the action was unjust, ten of his fellow workers held a sit-in in the mine, keeping out other employees for thirty-two hours until the company agreed to reinstate the discharged miner and all the strikers but one.⁵⁷ But such a victory, shallow as it was, was a rare occurrence.

Only a viable labour organization seemed to be the answer.

The general attitude toward the organizing of the toiler in the late thirties was different from it had been when the OBU or even the MWUC had tried to create branches of their respective organizations in the coal fields of south-eastern Saskatchewan. The Wagner Act had been passed in the US and even the "Wheat Province" had its weak imitation in the Freedom of Trade Union Association Act (1938) which "provided that it shall be lawful for employees to form themselves into a trade union or join a trade union...." Symptomatic of this changing atmosphere was the renewed vigour of the United Mine Workers of America after it broke away from the AFL to form an important part of the Congress of Industrial Organizations. In the last half of the thirties the Mine Workers regained control of most of what had been District 18, and from the headquarters in Calgary interest was again shown in the Saskatchewan fields as it had been before the war.

Largely on the strength of a percapita levy on the miners in District 18, John Stokaluk, a man long associated with miners' unions in Alberta under various labels, came into the Estevan-Bienfait area on August 20, 1938 to organize for the UMWA, after having been invited to do so by the miners there. On September 11 a local was formed, but a week later, under pressure from management at the Western Dominion Collieries, the Saskatchewan Lignite Miner's Union, a company union, was formed in Taylorton and sought affiliation with the boss-oriented Canadian Federation of Labour. Toward that end a Mr. J. Miller, the solicitor for the CFL journal, The Labour Review, Alex McAuslane, the CFL's western organizer, A.D. Maynard of the virtually defunct OBU, and the infamous Mrs. Isobel Patton⁵⁸ arrived in the

area at the end of September to talk up the CFL among the men. They were informed that they had the full support of not only the operators but also the provincial government, and that on October 1 the company would institute a checkoff for the CFL. Three other locals were formed in the next few weeks.⁵⁹

In the meantime, the sentiment in favour of the Mine Workers had spread throughout the field, with eighty-five percent of the men at the Manitoba and Saskatchewan mine in favour, while the rest opposed any organization.⁶⁰ The union's representatives and Stokaluk approached the operators on September 22 to negotiate a contract, but were informed by the manager of Western Dominion that the recognition of the CFL affiliate was a fait accompli.⁶¹ The men at the Taylorton plant reacted by walking out on October 1, and two days later the district headquarters of the UMWA endorsed the strike but cautioned the men "to obey the laws and policies of our organization and the laws of the country."⁶² The strikers were joined a week later by the men at Bienfait Mine No. 1, who thought that they were filling the Western Dominion coal orders. By mid-month all the workers in the major mines were on strike, involving some 516 men.⁶³

The initial response of the operators to the strike was to take the traditional approach of dismissing those that refused to join the company union,⁶⁴ but when the strike spread they informed the miners that they had to vacate the houses they occupied by the end of November.⁶⁵ However, the advantage held by the operators declined when CFL organizer McAuslane concluded that the Federation had no right in the mine field and informed the UMWA that the Mine Workers had the vast majority of men signed up and that "any other union's attempt to enter

field should be considered scabbing." To confirm his contention he issued a press release to this effect as well.⁶⁶

Meanwhile, the provincial government was desperately seeking a settlement and on October 11 a delegation from the CFL union, which according to the UMWA officials had been rounded up from the beer parlours and funded by the companies,⁶⁷ waited on the government and asked for police protection against alleged intimidation from the UMWA. Incidental to the discussion, one of the delegation explained that the CFL was in the area because

For years, the miners have been dominated by a foreign organization, with no autonomy, and with dues so onerous they could not afford to pay them, and the day must come when Canadian workers will be organized in Canadian unions, directed in Canada and not from Moscow or the U.S.A.

But the provincial authorities failed to be convinced that the dispute was more than just a squabble between two unions, and refused to grant protection.⁶⁸

The next day the government interviewed representatives of the Mine Workers (Stokaluk and Pat Conroy, vice-president of District 18), who explained their side of the situation and stated that they were prepared to see a "properly supervised" referendum of the whole field to determine who in fact had jurisdiction.⁶⁹ But that night, after a mass meeting, the men decided to strike the eight big companies, fifteen of the smaller operators having signed on October 11. However, the strike, which began on the 15th, only lasted four days, because a representative of the federal Department of Labour informed the Mine Workers that their strike was contrary to the IDIA. The men returned to work on the 20th and applied for a conciliation board the next day.⁷⁰ After consulting with the Minister of Labour, Norman Rogers, in Regina and

Winnipeg, the Mine Workers' secretary, A.J. Morrison, was granted a conciliation board after a supervised vote had been taken in the area on jurisdiction.⁷¹

The CFL unions immediately protested, claiming that they had operating agreements with three of the mines and they were supported by seven of the eight operators that had been struck. The operators in fact claimed that there was no dispute.⁷² The protest, however, was in vain. On October 24 and 25 the Western Representative of the Department of Labour, F.E. Harrison, took a poll of the workers in the eight mines affected to establish first of all who was in favour of a conciliation board and then which union they wished to represent them. The results showed a tally of 589 to 37 for a board and 504 votes to 122 (and a majority in each mine) for the UMWA.⁷³

On the strength of the vote the department established a Conciliation Board composed of Angus Morrison representing the men, D.B. Hogarth, K.C. of Regina for the operators, and together after a lengthy delay they decided on Professor A.R. Greig, the Superintendent of Buildings at the University of Saskatchewan as chairman.⁷⁴

The Board began its investigation early in the new year in a conscientious manner. Mine sites were personally examined and testimony was gathered from all protagonists, but alas, by January 16 it found that agreement was impossible so it adjourned until May 15, and issued an interim report of its unsuccessful activities.⁷⁵ Meanwhile, the operators and the Mine Workers local carried on a war of nerves accentuated by rumour and by the paranoid personality of the local's president, Vincent Clark, who thrived on the rumours.

The campaign of the operators took the form of silent

intimidation. In spite of the orders of the Board in its interim report, men were dismissed for little reason,⁷⁶ and in other cases union supporters were ignored by the operators on work calls in favour of men from outside points.⁷⁷ On still other occasions certain shafts were only operated sporadically and those that wanted work had to sign up with the CFL union. Those that belonged to the CFL received raises while the UMWA men did not.⁷⁸

Word of such acts spread quickly in the closed, isolated society that contained the mine fields, and UMWA supporters must have found it difficult to remain true to their convictions in the face of domestic pressures. They suffered from further insecurity as a result of the test holes being drilled by some of the companies in preparation for a stripping operation. Their fears were strengthened by the rumours of secret conferences between the operators with the object of forming a new company, under new management, which would not come under the restrictions imposed by the conciliation board. This way the operators could do what they wanted with their union problems.⁷⁹ There was also the constant fear of violence and the union kept close watch on its records for fear that the office would be raided.⁸⁰

The ultimate blow to UMWA men came late in April from A.J.M. Wilson, the notorious general superintendent of the Western Dominion operation, who had made it a personal crusade to crush the CIO in the area. He announced that UMWA members in Taylorton had to vacate their homes by the end of May.⁸¹

While the men must have wanted to strike out against the operators and the property they controlled in whatever manner they could, they had been ordered by union headquarters to maintain restraint and

to act within the bounds of the orders of the Board.⁸² The only way they could retaliate was to try and convince the men imported to break the union that the UMWA had majority support in the mines. The letters "U.M.W.A." began to appear everywhere in chalk. To aid the campaign the mine fields became Sub-district 10 of District 18, with a permanent office established on March 1, 1939.⁸³ When a new contract between the operators and the CFL was rumoured in mid-April, the UMWA local was ordered to hold a demonstration against it. The only other thing they could do to protect themselves was to protest to Chairman Greig that the union men were being discriminated against, contrary to the Board's order to maintain the status quo. When the men received eviction notices, the local protested directly to the Minister of Labour.⁸⁴ He responded by urging the Board to reconvene.⁸⁵ However, because Morrison could not be present, the Board did not sit until May 16.

When it did begin deliberations again it faced more problems. All but one of the witnesses drawn from management had to be subpoenaed and the chief spokesman of the operators openly stated that the deliberations were a farce and that the only way the situation would be settled would be through a stand-up fight between the operators and the union.⁸⁶ Yet within six weeks the Board drafted and tabled a report. The majority opinion, expressed by Morrison and Greig, concluded that while wages in the mines should have risen over the previous ten years to meet the rising cost of living, they had in fact dropped; that while living conditions in some of the company towns were good, in others they were "not fit for human habitation"; that in spite of the province's Coal Mines Safety and Welfare Act, working

conditions and especially ventilation facilities were not the best; and that the CFL activities in the field were sponsored by the companies and thus the organization was not representative of worker opinion. The report therefore recommended that the provincial government pass legislation similar to Alberta's Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act, which stated that an employer had to deal with a committee of the majority of his employees. Only through the recognition of a bona fide miners' union could industrial peace come to the area.

The minority report of the operator's representative, B.D. Hogarth, while substantially longer, merely reiterated management's position on the whole affair since August, 1938, and concluded that the future of all the mines, all allegedly operating on narrow profit margins, depended completely on the actions of the miners, because "to date in the operation of these mines those who benefited most have been the men employed."⁸⁷

In the meantime, the tempers of the men had flared again, heads were cracked and the union had to pay fines resulting from assault charges against some of its members.⁸⁸ And the men were no more pleased when they found that the operators refused to abide by the Board's ruling. Privately, management's objections were not so much to the proposed increase in wages as to the recognition of the universally hated CIO and its affiliated UMWA.⁸⁹ The problem, however, according to the union, lay in the fact that Saskatchewan legislation was inadequate for the situation, in that it did not compel employers to recognize the organization chosen by the majority of employees.⁹⁰ So the war of nerves continued, with the union trying

to maintain morale among its members through rallies and picnics,⁹¹ while its leaders attempted to meet the operators. At the same time, CFL organizers tried to drum up support for their organizations⁹² and they did in fact impose an agreement on the Western Dominion stripping operation, formerly owned by Truax-Traer.⁹³ Also, the more adamant operators continued their discrimination against the union's men. Finally, the miners at the Bienfait number two mine were called out after a vote was taken.⁹⁴

At this point the provincial government again intervened and called both sides to a conference in Regina on September 27. Here the federal department proposed a feasible solution--that both unions leave the area and that the men form their own independent organization to negotiate with the operators. But again stalemate was the result and on October 16, with the mines working at peak capacity in anticipation of winter orders, the CIO union called out all the men, some 400 in number. Pickets were set up outside the mines, cutting off movement to and from the sites. Broadsides headlined, "ARE YOU A SCAB? ARE YOU AFFLICTED WITH LEPROSY?" were distributed to CFL men who insisted on crossing the lines.⁹⁵ Curses were exchanged as emotions ran high. More UMWA supporters were evicted from company houses.⁹⁶ A picket was struck by a car driven by Wilson and had to be attended to.⁹⁷ In retaliation, on October 20 a car carrying the investigator for Western Dominion and a special constable was upset by the pickets, causing injury to the occupants. Soon after, 150 extra RCMP officers were moved into the area to assist in keeping roads open to Western Dominion's stripping operation for the movement

of men. On the 23rd one of the companies secured an injunction restraining the pickets from blocking access to its property and intimidating the men in the CFL union. However, tensions still continued at a fever pitch.⁹⁸

What saved the provincial government from substantial embarrassment was the realization that a war had been declared. This placed the coal resources of the area in a completely different light. Another conference of all parties concerned was called in Regina on November 29⁹⁹ and after ten days of negotiations a settlement was reached. Under its terms both the UMWA and the CFL agreed to withdraw from the field for the duration of the war and one year thereafter. In their place a non-affiliated central union would be set up to negotiate with the operators who agreed to a closed shop, an eight hour day, a cost of living adjustment every three months and the hiring of all local men without discrimination. The only exception applied to Western Dominion's stripping operation, where the jurisdiction of the CFL still applied. A committee composed of representatives of the two unions (Conroy for the Mine Workers and Allan Meikle for the CFL) and one from the government (C.A. Scott) was to guarantee successful operation of the agreement.¹⁰⁰ On December 11 the men returned to work.

Those men who had supported the Mine Workers accepted the agreement as the best possible under the circumstances. For the union, even though most of the former demands had been granted, it was a defeat, because recognition had not been achieved. By the first month of the new year the UMWA office was closed out and the union

withdrew, \$30,881.23 poorer for its sixteen-month experience with south-eastern Saskatchewan miners.¹⁰¹ The only remaining formal link was the union's representative on the supervisory committee, Pat Conroy, and the sub-district's former secretary-treasurer, who was officially released to join the new union but was unofficially retained by the UMWA to keep headquarters informed of developments in the area.¹⁰² By April, 1940, Vincent Clark had become secretary-treasurer of the Central Union.

But even from the beginning there was ample evidence that the December 7, 1939, agreement could not guarantee peace in the mine fields. The roots of division were too deep. There were notable exceptions, however, like the representatives of the Manitoba and Saskatchewan Coal Company and the manager of Lignite Coal Mine, Limited, who showed a sincere willingness to assist the committee in bringing peace to the area. But the tone for most of the mines was set by Wilson of Western Dominion. As Conroy described him and his company:

...his disposition seemed to be one of complete contempt of any effort by the government to improve the situation in the field.... There is no evidence at hand of this Company's willingness to discuss anything from a basis of fact. Its whole attitude is built on the pre-supposition that mine-workers and officers of the government must be at the disposal of the Company, demands met when made and with the Company maintaining a dominant position in all relationships.¹⁰³

Toward this objective of maintaining his own particular brand of tyranny, Wilson flouted the agreement right from the first weeks of its operation. He refused to open some shafts to members of the Central Union and at others former strikers were refused jobs. In addition, a couple of shacks on company property that had been loaned

to the strikers by private individuals were smashed by caterpillar and burned on Wilson's orders while he looked on.¹⁰⁴ The result of these acts was more violence. On one particular occasion late in December, 1939, there was a heated exchange of words between some miners and Mr. Truax, now in the employ of Western Dominion, and the latter received a broken jaw for his opinions.¹⁰⁵ The men were again contemplating strike. Only the arrival of Scott, the government representative on the committee, averted it.

The attitude of most of the smaller companies was similar to that of Mr. Wilson. In fact, in their mines the men suffered more, because they did not have the wherewithal to provide decent living and working conditions. Yet, despite their inferior position, the small operators looked to Western Dominion as an example "to justify 'cutthroat' tactics in both prices and wages."¹⁰⁶ Ultimately, however, only a large operation like Western Dominion had the staying power to win such a battle. But for a few years the war provided a profitable respite from the traditional problems that plagued the industry.

With ever-increasing examples of the strength of the military complex on the prairies in the form of airports and military bases, the mines found a heavy consuming, regular paying customer. In addition, with better quality coals being channelled into wartime production, greater pressure was placed on Saskatchewan's lignite resources to supply the usual market, and the situation was made more difficult when labour trouble hit the BC-Alberta fields late in 1943. Production records were set each year of the war¹⁰⁷, and for the first time in over two decades there was a labour shortage in the area.

Numerous "green" men, either farmers wishing to supplement their incomes between harvest and seeding, or conscientious objectors, filled the company towns, especially of Western Dominion and M and S where there was better accommodation and more fellowship.¹⁰⁸ The cost of living bonuses were granted periodically but the men wanted more, again seeking parity with their confreres to the west. They argued that "it takes just as much energy to load a ton of cheap coal as high-priced coal."¹⁰⁹

By this time industrial relations in the Saskatchewan lignite fields were under the jurisdiction of the federal Wartime Labour Relations Board.¹¹⁰ Yet the Board was recognized as "very slow people in acting on the workers' application for an increase in wages."¹¹¹

While a wage increase was viewed as important to the miners, the question of jurisdiction had again reared its ugly, divisive head. With renewed prosperity Wilson of Western Dominion decided that he could live with the Central Miners' Union on an official level, but behind the scenes he returned to his policy of subterfuge. As early as November, 1940, the president of the CFL, Allan Meikle, was reported to be organizing in the area again,¹¹² and on several occasions thereafter. The UMWA complained to the provincial government that Meikle's activities were contrary to the December, 1939 agreement, but to no avail,¹¹³ even though the Mine Workers threatened to re-enter the field if the situation continued.

When the coal and manpower shortage became critical late in 1941, Wilson blamed it on the M and S Mine, claiming that he had no trouble getting more than an eight hour day out of his CFL men at the stripping operation.¹¹⁴ Thus when Western Dominion developed another

deep seam mine in April, 1942, it established the CFL as the union with jurisdiction, again contrary to the December, 1939 agreement. Once more there were complaints and threats to Regina from the UMWA.¹¹⁵

The dispute continued for well over a year, with the Central Union insisting that all men working underground be members of their organization. The men involved claimed that they were members of the CFL by compulsion only. The situation finally came to a head during the summer of 1943, with the wage position complicating the problem. There was even talk of drafting coal miners to maintain production.¹¹⁶ Finally, at the request of the provincial Bureau of Labour, F.E. Harrison, the western representative of the federal Department of Labour, visited the area and recommended a conciliation board under the IDIA,¹¹⁷ but it was never set up. Harrison himself recommended that Western Dominion recognize the contract with the Central Union, but, as expected, it was not heeded. To add to the men's frustration, their submission to the War Labour Board for a wage increase early in October was not answered. Finally, in mid-November a strike vote was taken by the 331 men in the Central Union, with a strike to begin on December 1st if no action was taken.¹¹⁸

The work stoppage was forestalled by a wage increase granted by the WLRB and an uneasy peace returned to the lignite fields for a year. But the CFL organizers continued their attempts to gain adherents. For some reason, the previously co-operative M and S company broke the 1939 agreement. In turn, the men working there asked to be represented by District 18 of the UMWA. On February 27, 1945, the Mine Workers Union asked the WLRB for certification as bargaining agents of 175 men employed by M and S.¹¹⁹ This followed a

meeting ten days earlier, when it was reported that eighty percent of the miners in the field had signed a referendum asking for the UMWA, and had passed a resolution designating Stokaluk, Livett and Morrison, all District 18 brass, as bargaining agents.¹²⁰

The Labour Relations Board heard oral submissions from all parties in Regina late in March and on the basis of the evidence collected ordered a vote to be taken in the field to "determine the wishes of the employees."¹²¹ The vote, which simply asked whether the individual wanted to be represented by the UMWA, District 18 for the purposes of bargaining, was held on May 2 and 3. The results in eight of the mines polled indicated unanimous backing for the union.¹²²

The Mine Workers appeared to have won when six of the companies agreed to meet with the union early in June, 1945, to negotiate, and in fact an agreement was reached, but when it came to ratification three backed out, two of them expressing a desire to wait for Western Dominion to sign. However, Wilson, in conversation with Stokaluk, indicated that he would never sign.¹²³ In response, Stokaluk made formal application for the intervention of the WLRB and H.S. Johnstone was appointed conciliation officer.¹²⁴ Under his watchful eye negotiations began again and on October 23, 1945, an agreement was signed with six of the operators, employing a total of 192 men.¹²⁵ For Stokaluk it had been a long struggle, lasting six years, expensive in time spent and costly to the rest of the men in District 18; but worst of all it was an empty victory, because Wilson was not one of the signatories.

The alarming and pathetic thing about the situation is the fact that the UMWA received so little support, either moral and financial

from the rest of organized labour in the province. In fact this willingness to ignore what was going on in the lignite mines in southeastern Saskatchewan went back to the first attempts by the Mine Workers to establish the principle of collective bargaining in the area. In Regina labour's newspaper, Saskatchewan Labor's Realm, brief mention was made of the 1907-1908 dispute, but there is no record of the advancement of financial support by that enthusiastic collection of unionists that made up Regina's first trades council.¹²⁶

It is understandable that Saskatchewan's TLC movement would greet with applause the difficulties faced by Christophers and the heretical OBU, but it was also quick to criticize the provincial government in 1931 when lives were lost. But Tom Molloy, the man who had risen from the presidency of Regina's first council to the position of deputy minister of labour (and had thus widened his perspective), stated that in fact the curse was on labour's house because during the summer of 1931 the miners had approached the Regina council to secure an organizer to alleviate their working conditions but were ignored, and Forkin, Scarlett and Sloan responded instead.¹²⁷

Again, early in 1938 Sam East, the pastor of Wascana United Church in Regina and a leading social democrat, approached the Trades and Labor Council to join a voluntary commission to investigate the conditions of the workers in the Estevan-Bienfait area and organize a union, but the council scoffed at the proposal, stating that it was the jurisdiction of the UMWA District 18 and accordingly "passed the buck." The District president, R. Livett asked the council to assist the good minister in a holding action until the UMWA was free from other commitments, but again the Regina TLC movement refused.¹²⁸

When the Mine Workers did enter the field in August and were immediately opposed by the CFL, their appeal for assistance and support came to a somewhat changed Regina council. The left wing led by the president John Chambers, pushed through the passage of a resolution condemning company unions in the coal fields and later reported to the council on their reasons, outlining the activities of Mrs. Patton and her cohorts. The council's traditional leaders, Cocks, Heseltine and Perry opposed the resolution because both unions were dual to the TLC.¹²⁹ Their contention was in fact true and especially pertinent when considered in the light of the UMWA's role in forming the CIO and dividing the North American labour movement. Yet the Winnipeg and District Trades and Labor Council, also a TLC affiliate, co-operated with the Winnipeg National Council of the All-Canadian Congress of Labour to produce and distribute a four-page broadside, "Facts About the Estevan Strike," to be used in a campaign to promote the products of mines that signed agreements with the UMWA and to boycott the rest.¹³⁰ The true attitude of most TLC unionists in Saskatchewan to the Estevan-Bienfait problem was summed up by Harry Perry of the Regina council, when he said that the miners should work out their own problems.¹³¹ When the miners struck late in 1939, resolutions of support were sent to the provincial government from organizations throughout the prairies, but the Saskatchewan TLC movement was silent, despite requests from the Mine Workers for assistance.¹³²

Although strange, Saskatchewan labour's reaction was understandable. Conservative and weak as it was, and so concerned about outside reaction, its traditional leadership did not want to carry the stigma of association with radical acts and violent behavior.

Non-involvement appeared to be the best solution to the problems of an area which was far away from them in many ways and thus an area they did not understand, with its "foreign" labourers working under terrible conditions for employers with whom organized workers could not reason, even with the assistance of a strike.

FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER V

- ¹Transcript of speech provided by W.G. Davies.
- ²Saskalls, Sept.-Oct., 1969, pp. 4-10.
- ³The Leader-Post, Nov. 17, 1943.
- ⁴Bureau of Labour Report, 1922-3, p. 7.
- ⁵Sask. Dept. of Labour file I 16(2).
- ⁶Motherwell Papers, file M12-31(Coal), Motherwell to Reginald Stewart, Nov. 12, 1907.
- ⁷Ibid., Laurier to Motherwell, Feb. 7, 1907.
- ⁸R.O. Wynne-Roberts, Report on Coal and Power Investigation, (Regina: King's Printer, 1913, p. 3.
- ⁹Bureau of Labour Report, 1916, p. 6.
- ¹⁰The Labour Gazette, Feb. 1908, table pp. 978-83 and March, 1909, p. 965.
- ¹¹Saskatchewan Labor's Realm, Jan. 31, 1908.
- ¹²The Labour Gazette, April, 1908, p. 1227, and June, 1908, pp. 1439-42.
- ¹³Ibid., Jan., 1909, pp. 703-6.
- ¹⁴Ibid., March, 1910, pp. 1002-4.
- ¹⁵Ibid., 1915-16, pp. 1841, 2874.
- ¹⁶The Searchlight, Aug. 13, 1920.
(O.B.U. paper published in Calgary).

¹⁷The Labour Gazette, 1917, pp. 610, 984.

¹⁸See Borden Papers, file 1124 for petitions from prairie organizations asking the federal government to step in and settle the dispute in the mountain mines.

¹⁹District Ledger, Aug. 1, 1919.

²⁰OBU Bulletin, Nov. 29, 1919.

²¹See Chapter III for more details on Christophers' misadventures among the crafts in Saskatchewan cities.

²²The Searchlight, July 9, 1920; OBU Bulletin, July 17, 1920.

²³OBU Bulletin, July 17, 24 and 31, 1920; Western Labor News, July 16 and Aug. 20, 1920; SA, Martin Papers, 35340-5 "Official Report of the Proceedings at Trial of those Alleged to be Concerned in the Kidnapping of one P.M. Christophers."

²⁴RCMP Records, RNWMP Letter Book, RG 18, A-2, V. 137, p. 1, A.A. McLean to N.W. Rowell, Feb. 27, 1919.

²⁵Martin Papers, 29980, Martin to W.L. Hamilton, July 3, 1920.

²⁶Ibid., 35340-5 "Official Report...."

²⁷Western Labor News, July 16, 1920.

²⁸Martin Papers, 29979, Companies to Martin, (telegram), July 7, 1920.

²⁹Western Labor News, July 16, 1920.

³⁰OBU Bulletin, Sept. 25, 1920.

³¹The Searchlight, July 9, 1920.

³²For information on the Lignite Utilization Board see the Bureau of Labour Reports, 1919-1924.

³³See Ibid. for names of men having mining licenses.

³⁴Dunning Papers, 14329, Molloy to Dunning, Oct. 22, 1920.

³⁵Census of Canada, 1921, Vol. 1, pp. 496-9, 1931 Vol. 2, pp. 438-41.

³⁶The Morning Leader, Dec. 9, 1924.

³⁷See Record of Proceedings, Commission to inquire into and concerning the dispute which has arisen between the miners and mine owners at or near the Town of Estevan and any matter or circumstances in connection therewith, 1931, for a vivid description of grievances and conditions.

³⁸GAI, UMWA District 18 files, (hereafter UMWA-18) "Estevan Strike."

³⁹Ibid.; The Western Miner, Aug. 27, 1931.

⁴⁰Deputy Minister of Labour Office files, file L1[M1], G.A. Calvert to Molloy, Sept. 18, 1931 and Molloy to Calvert, Sept. 22, 1931.

⁴¹The Left Wing, Nov., 1925.

⁴²See The Canadian Miner for 1931.

⁴³Because of the contradictory nature of source material the writer has had to make a judgement, and unless otherwise noted the sources for the events of September-October, 1931 are (1) a "Short Chronological Review of the Labour Dispute--Sask. Lignite Coal Fields--September-October 1931", prepared by T.M.Molloy and dated October 28, 1931 located in Sask. Dep. Min. of Labour Office files, file L1 [M1], (2), a five page outline of the events entitled "Estevan Strike" in UMWA-18, (3) The Labour Gazette, Oct., 1931, pp. 1065-7.

⁴⁴Bennett Papers, 267263, M.S. Campbell to H.H. Ward (Dep. Min. of Labour), Sept. 21, 1931.

⁴⁵Ibid., 267264, T.S. Belcher to Bennett, Sept. 30, 1931. See also 267373-6, H.H. Stevens to Bennett, Oct. 5, 1931 enclosing an "eye-witness view" of the riot.

⁴⁶Ibid., 267369, Maj. Gen. McNaughton to A.W. Merriam (Bennett's Private Secretary), Sept. 30, 1931.

⁴⁷UMWA-18, Typewritten copy of agreement, Oct. 6, 1931.

⁴⁸See Record of Proceedings, Wylie Commission.

⁴⁹RLO, 1931, p. 172.

⁵⁰Labour Gazette, March, 1932, p. 285.

⁵¹Ibid., March, 1932, pp. 285-8, April, 1932, pp. 390, 397.

⁵²Ibid., March, 1932, pp. 262-70.

⁵³Ibid., May, 1932, pp. 532-3.

⁵⁴Sask. Department of Labour file I 10(2), Molloy to E.R. Kennedy, June 22, 1938.

⁵⁵The Labour Gazette, May, 1935, pp. 416-7 and May, 1936, p. 407.

⁵⁶Legislative Assembly Office files, No. 220, p. 15.

⁵⁷Ibid., Dec. 1937, p. 1322.

⁵⁸See Chapter IV for more details on Mrs. Patton's activities.

⁵⁹RLO, 1937, p. 154.

⁶⁰ The information to this point has been taken from UMWA-18, an undated chronology, and a pamphlet "Facts about the Estevan Strike", issued by the Winnipeg And District Trades and Labor Council and the Winnipeg National Council, A-CCL.

⁶¹ Ibid., Stokaluk and V.E. Clark to operators, Sept. 22, 1938, and A.E. Turner to Stokaluk, Sept. 28, 1938.

⁶² Ibid., R. Livett, (District 18 president) to J. Krydsky, Oct. 3, 1938.

⁶³ Ibid., list of numbers of men on strike at each mine.

⁶⁴ Ibid., Livett to John Queen (Wpg. Mayor), telegram, October 3, 1938.

⁶⁵ Ibid., A.C.M. Wilson to L. Hanson, Oct. 20, 1938.

⁶⁶ Ibid., McAuslane to Stokaluk (telegram) Oct. 8 and (letter), Oct. 15, 1938.

⁶⁷ Ibid., Bienfait local UMWA to T.C. Davis, n.d.

⁶⁸ Legislative Assembly Office files, No. 220, p. 13.

⁶⁹ Ibid., No. 221.

⁷⁰ UMWA-18, J. McD to all companies, Oct. 16, 1938.

⁷¹ Ibid., Morrison to Stokaluk, Oct. 29 and Nov. 5, 1939.

⁷² The Labour Gazette, Nov. 1938, p. 1201.

⁷³ UMWA-18, "Recapitulation of Vote Taken..." sent by Harrison to Stokaluk, Nov. 19, 1938.

⁷⁴ Ibid., W.M. Dickson (Dep. Min. of Labour) to Morrison, telegram and letter, Nov. 22, 1938; The Labour Gazette, Dec. 1938, p. 1331, Jan. 1939, p. 8. Dominion Briquettes and Chemicals Ltd. was

excluded from the jurisdiction of the Board because it was an industrial rather than an extractive operation and therefore beyond the pale of the Act, thus leaving only seven mines involved.

⁷⁵The Labour Gazette, Feb., 1939, p. 126-7.

⁷⁶UMWA-18, Clark to Greig, March 28, 1939.

⁷⁷Ibid., April 24, 1939.

⁷⁸Ibid., Clark to Morrison, April 3 & 24, 1939.

⁷⁹Ibid., Clark to Morrison, March 8 and 18, 1939, and Memo, Conroy to Morrison "re Great West Coal Company and Truax-Traer", March 30, 1939. The fears of the miners were justified by a report which appeared in The Financial Post on July 22, 1939, discussing an operator motivated rationalization of the area to escape the jurisdiction of the Board.

⁸⁰Ibid., Morrison to Clark, Feb. 22, 1939.

⁸¹Ibid., Clark to UMWA, Calgary, transcript of telephone conversation, 5:20 p.m., April 28, 1939.

⁸²Ibid., Morrison to Clark (telegram), April 29, 1939.

⁸³Ibid., Clark to Morrison, Feb. 19 and March 8, 1939.

⁸⁴Ibid., Clark to N.M. Rogers, (telegram), May 2, 1939.

⁸⁵Ibid., Rogers to Clark (telegram), May 3, 1939.

⁸⁶Ibid., Conroy to Premier W.J. Patterson, Aug. 1, 1939.

⁸⁷The Labour Gazette, Aug. 1939, pp. 782-98.

⁸⁸UMWA-18, Morrison to Clark, July 14 and 18, 1939; Clark to UMWA Calgary, (telegram), July 14, 1939.

⁸⁹Kerr Papers, file "Coal: 1938-40," G.A. Calvert to J.R. Hill, Aug. 8, 1939.

⁹⁰UMWA-18, Conroy to Premier Patterson, Aug. 1, 1939.

⁹¹Ibid., Clark to Morrison, July 25, 1939.

⁹²Kerr Papers, file "Coal: 1938-40," Calvert to Hill, Aug. 23, 1939.

⁹³UMWA-18, Conroy to Premier Patterson, Aug. 22, 1939.

⁹⁴Ibid., Clark to Conroy (telegram), Sept. 18 and Sept. 19, 1939.

⁹⁵Kerr Papers, file "Coal: 1938-40," copy of broadside.

⁹⁶UMWA-18, Kathleen Macready (union steno) to Pascoe, Oct. 23, 1939.

⁹⁷Ibid., Clark to Morrison, June 12, 1940.

⁹⁸The Labour Gazette, Nov., 1939, pp. 1096-7.

⁹⁹UMWA-18, J.W. Estey (Sask. Attorney-General) to Morrison (telegram), Nov. 27, 1939.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., Copy of agreement, Nov. 29 and Dec. 7, 1939.

¹⁰¹Ibid., "Expenses re Estevan Sub-District No. 10" April 12, 1940. The sum was made up primarily of strike pay, legal fees and organizing expenses.

¹⁰²Ibid., Conroy to Clark (telegram), Jan. 8, 1940; Morrison to Clark, Jan. 18, 1940.

¹⁰³Kerr Papers, file "Coal: 1938-40," Conroy to J.R. Hill, March 21, 1940.

¹⁰⁴UMWA-18, Stokaluk to Hill, Jan. 7, 1940.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., Clark to Conroy, Dec. 28, 1939, Conroy to Kerr, Jan. 3, 1940, Stokaluk to Hill, Jan. 7, 1940, Frank Duskewich to UMWA Calgary, May 12, 1940.

¹⁰⁶Kerr Papers, file "Coal: 1938-40," Conroy to Hill, March 21, 1940.

¹⁰⁷The Leader-Post, Nov. 17, 1943 and Dec. 20, 1943.

¹⁰⁸The Saskatchewan Mines Inspector took a group of Mennonite bishops on a tour of the area but he reported: "I did not take them to any of the small mines where living conditions are poor, as these mines cannot expect to get men until them [sic] have provided satisfactory living conditions." Kerr Papers, file 19, S.W. Holley to P.W. Doake, Nov. 12, 1942.

¹⁰⁹The Leader-Post, Nov. 17, 1943.

¹¹⁰Sask. Dept. of Labour file II A 14, Smith to M.M. Maclean (Chief Exec. Officer, National WLRB), Aug. 29, 1945.

¹¹¹UMWA-18, Clark to Stokaluk, April 7, 1943 and Stokaluk to Clark, April 20, 1943.

¹¹²Ibid., Conroy to Clark, Nov. 20, 1940.

¹¹³Ibid., Conroy to E.H. Culliton, Jan. 20, 1941 and Culliton to Conroy, Feb. 6, 1941.

¹¹⁴Kerr Papers, file 19, Holley to J.R. Hill, (Dep. Min. Natural Resources), Jan. 13, 1942.

¹¹⁵UMWA-18, Morrison to Kerr, April 13, 1942.

¹¹⁶The Leader-Post, Aug. 27, 1943.

¹¹⁷Ibid.

¹¹⁸Ibid., Nov. 12 and 17, 1943.

¹¹⁹Sask. Dept. of Labour file II-A-14, Application by UMWA District 18 for certification, Feb. 27, 1945.

¹²⁰Ibid., J. Sandstrom to WLRB, March 20, 1945.

¹²¹Ibid., A.J. Smith to H.S. Johnstone (Industrial Relations Officer, Dept. of Labour), April 19, 1945.

¹²²Of 119 eligible voters there were 104 votes cast, 102 of which were affirmative and two were spoiled. At one mine not enough men turned out. Ibid., Johnstone to Smith, April 27, 1945; Certification of Result of Vote, May 2, 1945.

¹²³Ibid., Stokaluk to Smith, Aug. 22, 1945.

¹²⁴Ibid., Stokaluk to Smith, Sept. 10, 1945; M.M. Maclean to Smith, Sept. 20, 1945.

¹²⁵Ibid., Johnstone to Smith, Oct. 30, 1945.

¹²⁶Sask. Labor's Realm, Jan. 31, 1908.

¹²⁷Deputy Minister of Labour Office file L1[M1], Molloy to Saskatoon Trades and Labor Council, Oct. 3, 1931.

¹²⁸RT&LC files, Chambers to East, Feb. 16, 1938 and Livett to Chambers, Feb. 18, 1938, RT&LC Minutes, Feb. 14, 1938 meeting.

¹²⁹RT&LC Minutes, Sept. 26, 1938 meeting and RT&LC files, Chambers report, Oct. 17, 1938.

¹³⁰UMWA-13, "Facts About the Estevan Strike" and C.S. Foster and Grant McLeod to Conroy (telegram), Nov. 8, 1938.

¹³¹RT&LC Minutes, Sept. 26, 1938 meeting.

¹³²Ibid., Nov. 13, 1939 Meeting; UMWA-18 "Resolution Passed by UGWA Local 35, Winnipeg, n.d.; T.M. Bee (Regina Labour Association) to Stokaluk, Oct. 30, 1939; J. Hutchinson to Stokaluk, Oct. 30, 1939; James Rogan (Secretary BLFE No. 52, M.J.) to Premier Patterson, Nov. 11, 1939; RT&LC files, Conroy to Chambers, Nov. 4 and 7, 1939.

CHAPTER VI

THE WAR, PROSPERITY AND THE PERMANENT THREAT: 1940-1945

For the better part of a decade organized labour everywhere warned all that would listen of the threat of fascism. But most chose to ignore its existence and they paid for their folly with another war. But this time labour's response was less emotional. The intervening quarter century since the beginning of the previous war had changed the ethnic makeup of Saskatchewan's organized labour to some extent. Defense of empire no longer had the same emotional impact as it had formerly, and war was viewed as less of a crusade although good and evil were clearly defined.

Yet many unionists did enlist. For those that stayed to man the war effort the mobilization of the nation's resources did not elicit the same response as it had earlier, primarily because government had learned from the experience of the previous conflict. Wage increases were geared to the cost of living, and while these wage controls diminished the role of the union, the whole atmosphere surrounding the place of the toiler in society had changed and his right to better his condition through joint action with his confreres was gradually being recognized in legislation. Thus, for the first time since the province's movement had been firmly rooted in the first decade, union membership increased rapidly. The well-established TLC unions benefitted as a matter of course, but from its perspective the

number of workers in the province that were organized by the new industrial movement affiliated with the Congress of Industrial Organizations was alarming. Efforts were made to counter the trend by local TLC men, even to the extent of flirting with industrial unionism, but financial and manpower resources were too limited. But when they turned to headquarters for assistance all they got were platitudes, again demonstrating the regional disparities that were prevalent in the TLC, which in turn left the Saskatchewan movement proportionately weaker in comparison with the nation as a whole. Thus, the CIO-affiliated Canadian Congress of Labour became a permanent threat and by the end of the war the old movement comprised an ever-decreasing proportion of the province's organized work force.

Considering the rather feeble condition of the trade union movement in Saskatchewan in the latter half of the thirties, it is rather surprising to note the leadership it provided to the segment of the community that was concerned by the rise of fascist thinking in Europe and elsewhere. But when motive is considered, labour's concern is not surprising. They knew full well that in the society espoused by fascist advocates there was no room for free trade unions engaged in collective bargaining. Hence, as early as 1925 the TLC Executive Board expressed trepidation with what it called "Fascisti methods" and began a campaign of opposition through the pages of its Journal.¹ But only when the sinister beast came closer to home did the campaign take on serious proportions. News reports of the activities of Adrien Arcand and his gang in Quebec, and rumours of the spreading influence of other nationalist groups in all provinces, showed that the threat was real. But even on such a fundamental issue there was no unanimity

of opinion as to method of combat between the various centres of labour strength in Saskatchewan.

The first real suggestion of alarm came from Saskatoon, where the community had traditionally been more seriously divided along ethnic lines than any other of the province's cities. In late February, 1938, the president of Saskatoon's Trades and Labor Council, G. Dealtry, suggested that the province's unionists gather in Regina to discuss the fascist threat. However, the potential hosts were dubious and felt that since labour came together so infrequently, that the subject of a provincial federation was more important and should receive preference. But something changed their minds, and by the end of April the Regina council was writing to all AFL-TLC affiliates concerning a conference on fascism and federation to be held in early June in their city. Moose Jaw immediately wanted postponement and they repeated the request at the end of May, ostensibly because of the death of three civic employees. At the same time the original instigators of the conference stated that they would not attend because of the fact that there was a provincial election pending and one of the members of the Saskatoon council was a labour-sponsored candidate.

By this time Regina labour felt that "Saskatoon has been playing us for suckers," but because arrangements had been made for the conference they would go ahead with it as a strictly local affair. When the delegates met on June 5, Alex Eddy of Saskatoon was the only out-of-town representative and as such he chaired the deliberations. After some discussion the federation scheme was dropped until after the TLC convention that fall. However, the only thing done about fasicism was the decision to hold another conference on June 19, this one to be

open to the public.

For the second conference the turnout was substantially better , with fifty people in attendance. The highlight of the day was a long, informative speech by Louis Rosenberg, a locally prominent Jewish social democrat. The rest of the day was taken up with the passage of resolutions advocating a concerted fight against fascism in co-operation with organizations pursuing similar ends throughout the country, and the formation of a permanent committee to realize this objective.²

While the efforts on the part of Saskatchewan's organized labour against the rise of fascism appear to be rather spasmodic and disorganized, the concern was still very real. While later activities in this direction were not as overt, labour did not lose sight of its objective. For example, after a resolution was passed at the 1938 TLC Convention urging the Canadian government to take a definite foreign policy stand against Germany and Italy, the Regina Council passed a resolution imploring Ottawa to co-operate with other governments "against Fascism and Nazi aggression."³ Then, in April, 1939, again following the Congress's lead, the Regina council sanctioned the boycott of Japanese and German goods in favour of "products made by non-aggressor nations."⁴ Thus when war broke out, labour was at least psychologically prepared.

The fact that labour's attitude towards war had changed in a quarter-century is demonstrated by a resolution passed by the 55th Annual Convention of the TLC which met shortly after war broke out. While on one hand declaring full support and assistance to all democratic countries against "all Fascist and Nazi nations", the assembled delegates also agreed that

...in order that the full resources of the Country may be

utilized for the achievement of victory, it is essential that profiteering and greed must be eliminated in the production of the sinews of war, and the supply and distribution of home requirements; To this end we urge that the machinery of production and the wealth of the nation be mobilized to serve the Country's interest instead of those of individuals and corporations, so that there will be an equitable contribution on the part of capital comparable to that of the sacrifice of human life.⁵

The Saskatchewan TLC Executive echoed the same resolution when it met the provincial government early in December, 1939.⁶ But even earlier the Regina council had gone on record as "being strongly opposed to profiteering especially in foodstuffs during the present war" and made its views known to Ottawa. The sentiment was especially strong at that September 11 meeting because the president of the council, Alex Cochrane, had just resigned because he had been called to serve.⁷

Many of the province's unionists had an emotional commitment to the war as demonstrated by the Regina council's reaction to an article which appeared in The Carpenter by AFL president William Green advocating United States non-involvement. They communicated their views to Green in no uncertain terms, stating that "in fact the Labor movement in this part of the Country are in favour of the fullest possible prosecution of the War in every shape and form, this we feel can be done without any infrengment [sic] on the rights of Labor."⁸ The members of local 1867 of the Carpenters and Joiners in Regina supported their beliefs by declaring their intention to work on government projects for ten hours a day, six days a week without extra money for overtime for the duration of the war, provided that the contractor gave the difference between straight time and overtime to the government.⁹ For the rest of the war labour merely responded in a socially desirable manner, buying and selling bonds,¹⁰ raising money

for the Red Cross,¹¹ and trying to persuade the government to raise the payment of soldiers.¹²

In short, the general response was one of "we've been through this before." For this reason labour tried to prevent the difficulties and hard feelings that were aroused during the previous struggle. Early in October, 1939, the TLC submitted a lengthy memorandum to Prime Minister King which, while giving "assurances of unwavering support in Canada's war effort", also demanded that the government outline its policy in regard to labour, the department under whose jurisdiction labour would fall, and to what extent labour would be represented in the ranks of the decision makers. The memorandum went on to say that the 1918 experience of compulsory arbitration was unacceptable and in its place the government should recognize the right of individuals to organize for collective bargaining, should establish minimum standards in regard to wages and hours, and should extend the Industrial Disputes Act to all industries. In this way industrial peace could be maintained.¹³

Such pronouncements, which from some quarters were probably labelled as blackmail, were of little significance because during this war the federal government was much more willing to consider the wishes of labour to ensure production. An Order-in-Council in December, 1940 (amended in June, 1941), P.C. 7440, provided a cost of living bonus for industries under the IDIA and recommended the same policy for others. These were replaced by P.C. 8253 in October, 1941 (the "Wartime Wages and Cost of Living Bonus Order"), which extended jurisdiction to virtually all industries and employees as well as providing for the establishment of the National War Labour Board together with Regional

War Labour Boards. P.C. 8253 was in turn replaced by the Wartime Wages Control Order (P.C. 5963 and a number of amendments). Then under P.C. 9384 of December 9, 1943, the wage stabilization policy was extended further and with its amendments over the next fourteen months the wages of almost all employees in the country were controlled and tied to the cost of living.

The essential rationale behind all the orders by the federal government was to establish an essential element of wage stability to facilitate wartime planning.¹⁴ Hence, there was some inconvenience. For example, due to the emergency state inherent in the fulfillment of war contract commitments, exemptions to such time-honoured pieces of provincial legislation as the One Day's Rest in Seven Act had to be granted. Further, owing to the orders of the NWLB, the activities of Saskatchewan's Minimum Wage Board had to be curtailed as it was not permitted to extend the provisions of the Act for which it was responsible into new territory, nor to revise wage rates in any manner.¹⁵

From the organized sector of the work force there was even more reason for concern. Wage controls effectively eliminated one of the major attractions of membership in a union.¹⁶ Thus there were complaints. At the end of October, 1941, the Trades and Labor Council of Montreal vehemently protested against P.C. 8253 because "democratic privileges...[were] being attacked...in freezing our wages, and we believe it will destroy our Trade Unions."¹⁷ The critique which emanated from the Regina council dealt more with the specific application of the Order and suggested amendments which would raise the minimum wage and make the bonuses applicable to all firms, large and small.¹⁸ The Deputy Minister of Labour assured labour that the problem

would be adjudicated by the NWLB and the regional boards that would be set up, and on these labour and industry would have equal representation.¹⁹ But then Saskatchewan's TLC leaders began a campaign of protest through the provincial executive against the method used to appoint the province's regional board.²⁰ In addition, labour complained that because changes in the financial relationship between employer and employee were in the hands of the boards and because most workers were not organized they had no access to the boards, thus dragging down standards for those that were organized. Thus labour's argument was that all increases granted should be compulsory on all employers in every industry.²¹ Feeling that grievances could be better handled at home, the Regina and Moose Jaw councils began to agitate late in 1941 for the creation of a provincial ministry of labour to deal with wartime problems.²²

By simple transposition, organized labour was easily able to shift its frustration to other government acts. For example, both the TLC and the Canadian Congress of Labour agreed that the appointment of Humphrey Mitchell as Minister of Labour late in 1942 was a bad move by the Prime Minister. Their reason was that "he had a bad record going in; was a complete misfit as far as Labour was concerned." Thus, "in interests of war-effort [sic] he should be out...."²³ As in the previous war, the federal government began to be viewed as the particular preserve of incompetents. Charges of "bungling and mismanagement" again began to fly, together with reports of "shortages of vitally essential but unquestionably available war materials; unnecessary bottlenecks in industry; labour turnover still extremely high and forced loafing predominant in many instance[s]." But as a solution

labour advocated even more government supervision.²⁴ Thus, whether they realized it or not, a significant proportion of Saskatchewan's labour leaders were having their faith confirmed in government intervention in almost all sectors of the Canadian economy by witnessing the process going on before their eyes.²⁵ When the Saskatchewan Provincial Committee on Rehabilitation and Reconstruction called for submissions from labour late in 1943, the briefs presented outlining labour's vision of the postwar world indicate the extent to which this process had progressed.²⁶

But while an ever larger number of Saskatchewan's organized workers were becoming increasingly visionary, their primary concerns were pragmatic and most of these revolved around wage controls. For example, in April, 1943, the Moose Jaw and Regina trades and labour councils complained that the Education Tax levied by the provincial government was unfair, because it created an increase in the cost of living which was not taken into consideration by the federal cost of living regulations, being the first tax of its kind in Canada.²⁷ However, the most serious criticism by labour of federal regulations came in December, 1943, with the invocation of the Wartime Wages Control Order, 1943 (P.C. 9384). The Order was viewed by the TLC "brass" as "a further intensification of an anti-labor attitude in official government circles", and the "most recent manifestation of government partiality to big business which tends to ignore the role played by Labor as a partner in our country's war effort." For these reasons the Congress initiated a campaign among anyone who would co-operate to bring to the attention of all legislators the unhappiness in the temple of labour. Thus, the wrath of the central body for the crafts also

descended on the King government for its unwillingness to comply with an alleged promise to create a legitimate Trade Union Act, for its general policy of governing by Order-in-Council, and for its apparent lack of a policy for postwar industrial reconstruction.²⁸

Saskatchewan's central bodies obediently followed the TLC lead. Typical was the Moose Jaw council which in mid-January, 1944, passed resolutions condemning P.C. 9384 because "said Wage Control Order is in opposition to all the basic principles of the Trade Union Movement and against the recognized principles of freedom and justice." Therefore, the resolution demanded that legislators reestablish the rights of Parliament in the face of government by Order-in-Council, which favoured "the big financial interests and large industrialists." It also called on King to call an election to "get an expression of the people" because his government had allegedly lost their confidence.²⁹

Despite desires to the contrary, neither the average worker nor the rank-and-file unionist was particularly concerned with the blustering of his trades council over alleged lack of confidence in the government's war effort. The war at least had ensured him a job, if only by removing competition. But initially, during 1940, he had not been so sure. With the uncertainty experienced in the economy immediately before and during the first few months of the war, there was a net decline of over five percent in the number of unionists in Canada in the three year period between the end of 1937 and the beginning of 1941.³⁰ In Saskatchewan the same regional disparities as had plagued the trade union movement during the early months of the first war came into play. On the day before Canada officially declared war on Germany (September 10, 1939) a confidential memorandum was sent from the federal

Minister of Public Works to Saskatchewan's Minister of Municipal Affairs, advising provincial authorities that federal public works schemes would be restricted, and money directed to wartime production.³¹ The labour movement, still concentrated in the building trades traditionally dependent on public money, and only just recovering from the disastrous depression, was quickly affected. The number of unionists in the province in 1939 was estimated at 10,254, but in 1940 the figure was recorded at 8,725. While nationally the number of unionists increased by 27.5% in 1941 and by another 25.3% in 1942³² the increases in Saskatchewan were substantially smaller. The movement only numbered 9,116 members in 1941 and 9,715 in 1945.³³ Trades councils were again faced with the problem of convincing locals whose delegate attendance was poor that they were only hurting themselves.³⁴

Realizing their plight, labour responded vocally to anyone in authority, as demonstrated by the following plea to the Minister of Finance from the Moose Jaw council:

I am instructed to bring to your attention the hardships which will ensue to the Building Trades of this province owing to the restrictions imposed on Building Construction by the Government. Saskatchewan is not provided with a lot of Government pap in the shape of war contracts and we have nothing to take the place of that which we have been deprived of, with the natural result that the imposition of these restrictions will have the effect of depriving us of the opportunity to earn that which we need for our existence.³⁵

During this war the federal government seemed more willing to listen and adopt ameliorative measures for Saskatchewan's workers, probably because there were more Members of Parliament from the province on the Government side of the House than had been the case in 1914-15. These men were only too willing to use their small influence for the benefit of their constituents.³⁶ Thus, the economy of

Saskatchewan's cities was diversified to some extent as the influx of capital coloured it with a rosier tinge than had been experienced twenty-five years earlier. In addition, the more mobile elements of the work force, especially in the construction industry, found ready employment as the numerous Commonwealth training bases scattered throughout the province.

Of much greater concern to the TLC movement in Saskatchewan as the war dragged into its third, fourth, and fifth years was the fact that despite the fertile ground for the organization of workers provided by prosperity and by amicable public sentiment, it was not getting its fair share of new unionists. Whatever rationale local officials used in placing the blame on outside forces and organizations, they realized that organization, like charity, had to begin at home. Yet, when they tried to change the situation with the assistance of their governing authorities, they discovered that their needs were low on the list of priorities drafted by the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada and the internationals.

Never in the history of industrial relations in Canada had the Canadian-American border appeared so insignificant in the free movement of attitudes, and the concomitant legislative ideas, as was witnessed in the latter half of the thirties. The depression had suddenly brought to public attention the legitimacy of the desire of workers to organize for collective bargaining. In the realm of legislation the change was most noticable in the United States in Section 7(a) of Title I of the National Industrial Recovery Act passed in June, 1933, which declared the right of employees to organize "free from the interference, restraint, or coercion of employers." There was an immediate revival of unionism, but it was stopped short by management's unwillingness to

co-operate. Two years later, however, the National Labor Relations Act, known as the Wagner Act, put legislative teeth into the organizing and bargaining process.

In Canada, where the jurisdiction over the majority of workers was in provincial hands, most provinces had an Industrial Standards Act by the late thirties, Saskatchewan's coming in 1938. These Acts were to be the equivalent of the NIRA. Also in 1938 Saskatchewan passed a Freedom of Trade Union Association Act, but like most legislation of the period it too required major denture work to make it entirely effective for labour.

With the advent of war, much power returned to the federal government which in its P.C. 2685, 1940 defined policy objectives as those of the Wagner Act. But from labour's view the statement was still toothless, depending on management's voluntary good will. Only the Saskatchewan Trade Union Act, 1944 passed by the newly elected CCF government with its provisions for compulsory recognition, was entirely to labour's liking.³⁷

But despite the legislative enforcement, labour realized early the more temperate attitude of the public. Hence the formation of the Committee for Industrial Organization within the AFL and the eventual break with the crafts over industrial unionism and the organization of mass production industries. Before the break the TLC gained considerably in membership, especially in central Canada,³⁸ but eventually the AFL forced the expulsion of the CIO unions from the TLC in 1939. The following year the CIO unions joined with the All-Canadian Congress of Labour, now primarily made up of the Canadian Brotherhood of Railway Employees, to form the Canadian Congress of Labour.

The most characteristic trait of the new central body was the evangelical fervour with which it intended to carry the gospel of unionism to all workers, no matter how few and in what industry. From the beginning the new Congress's executive was obsessed with organization.³⁹ Voluntary donations were solicited from member unions for an organizing fund⁴⁰ with the emphasis to be placed on peacetime industries because of their more permanent nature.⁴¹ However, the voluntary approach proved unsuccessful so a per capita assessment for general organization was recommended to the 1941 convention.⁴² The policy established was one in which the larger affiliates were held responsible for their own organization work. If locals were organized in a given industry by one of the Congress's general organizers they would be handed over to the appropriate international after the international had contributed toward the expenses of organizing the new locals.⁴³ Thus, by 1942-43 the Congress had twenty-four enthusiastic paid organizers in the field in various parts of the country,⁴⁴ their activities co-ordinated by Vice-President Pat Conroy in his capacity as Director of Organization.⁴⁵

As far as concerted interest by the CCL-CIO in Saskatchewan workers was concerned, there was very little until 1941 when Conroy authorized the establishment of an organizer for the Packinghouse Workers' Organizing Committee in Alberta in May of that year.⁴⁶ From there the organizer moved into Saskatchewan. While the CCL had early established the policy of peaceful co-existence with the TLC by avoiding the crafts and concentrating on mass-production industries⁴⁷ he ran headlong into a TLC directly chartered local organized at Moose Jaw's Canada Packers plant earlier that year. He easily convinced the

men of the error of their ways and they applied for certification with the United Packinghouse Workers of America as bargaining agents.

Local 177 of the UPWA was the first step. Between August, 1941, and July, 1942, the CCL organized the Laundry Workers and the Clay Products Workers, and brought them together with CCL international affiliates into the Moose Jaw Labour Council.⁴⁸ In turn, the men from the council did their share of organization work, supplementing the organizers. In the year 1942-43 two locals of oil workers were formed in Regina, together with a group of automobile workers. Employees at the sodium sulphate plants at Bishopric and Moose Jaw were brought into the fold, and a Regina Labour Council was formed.⁴⁹

A possible reason why there was so much interest in Saskatchewan starting in 1942 was that at the 1942 CCL convention, UPWA local 177 and the Moose Jaw Labour Council urged the executive "to place several full-time, paid organizers in the prairie provinces."⁵⁰ The Regina CCL council repeated the request the following year.⁵¹ Thus, during the year 1943-4 the flood-gate opened, with paid organizers appearing to be everywhere, organizing with the assistance of the local CCL leaders anyone that held a job. The report of the organizing committee to the 1944 convention showed a total of fourteen directly-chartered locals formed in Saskatchewan during the fiscal year in question.⁵² This figure did not include unions organized directly by CIO international unions. Admittedly stimulated by the CCF win in the 1944 provincial election,⁵³ the same trend continued in 1945, with hardly a month going by without at least one new CCL affiliate being reported to the Congress's Canadian Unionist.⁵⁴ The tally also included labour councils in Saskatoon and Prince Albert. The Congress had moved into all

of the province's industrial and service industries together with government employees. Even the provincial council of the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation expressed serious interest in affiliating with the CCL early in 1943.⁵⁵ In addition, in August, 1944, the province's CCL affiliates accomplished something that the TLC unions had not been able to do in almost forty years, namely form a provincial federation.⁵⁶

The intensive organizing activity carried on by the Canadian Congress of Labour organizers and those of the CIO international unions caused no little amazement and concern in the ranks of the province's TLC movement. Most of them knew that they had a definite advantage over the upstart CCL in the organizing field having developed with the industrial life of the province. In fact, many employers were extremely suspicious of CCL motives when they saw the number of Communists actively involved in the newer Congress. Thus, they were determined to oppose the threat to the extent of their resources.⁵⁷ In addition, the attitude of many local TLC leaders toward the unskilled and semi-skilled sectors of the work force had changed radically during the thirties. During a very important meeting in mid-June, 1936, the Regina Trades and Labor Council, with the impetus provided by new, young delegates came to grips with the whole question of industrial unionism. The consensus was that while craft unionism has been of benefit to labour in the past it was of little use for the future when the majority of workers had to be organized to protect labour from pressures which were bound to be exerted by employers.⁵⁸

Possibly as an indication of the revised thinking of some TLC unionists the Regina Civic Employees' Association was organized in

January, 1934, through the efforts of the council in the Queen City.⁵⁹

A more significant indication of their democratic tastes came in March, 1938, when the Regina council's executive seriously inquired of the Congress to whether it would be constitutional for them to organize the General Motors plant in the city into a local of the United Automobile Workers.⁶⁰ Elsewhere, in January, 1940, the Swift Current Trades and Labor Union, containing a mixture of craftsmen and unskilled labourers, was organized (probably by Moose Jaw unionists) and sought TLC affiliation.⁶¹

In part, the concern for the previously unorganized by the TLC unions, resulting in a shift in emphasis in a more industrial union direction, was motivated by the realization of the changing legislative climate and a desire to take advantage of it. In addition, unlike the CCL, the TLC movement had lost a lot of ground and prestige during the thirties⁶² only some of which had been regained with the revival of the construction industry after 1937.⁶³

It was readily realized by most unionists in a leadership capacity that before the ranks of labour could be appreciably augmented a significant personnel and financial base would have to be re-established with the councils, the bodies generally recognized as responsible for organization. Thus, for example, the Regina council in 1939 tried to restore delegate contact with truant unions and even attempted to convince the previously independent railway unions of the wisdom of affiliation in the interests of "increasing the strength of organized labor in this city of Regina."⁶⁴ These efforts were accompanied by an intensive union label campaign, also to create interest.

Having done whatever groundwork they could, the trades and

labour councils in the province began a concerted organizing campaign in 1940, showing little concern for the particular skill (or lack of it) of those approached. For example, the Organizing Committee of Saskatoon's council began to work among the city's hospital workers in June.⁶⁵ Another gem in the TLC crown provided by the Saskatoon council was the Flour, Cereal and Feed Mill Workers' Federal Union No. 72 formed early in 1942.⁶⁶ In Moose Jaw the council showed interest in the 300 employees at the Canada Packers plant, and with the assistance of TLC western organizer, Carl Berg, managed to get them organized early in 1941 into a directly chartered local called the Packing Plant Employees' Federal Union No. 75.⁶⁷

In the meantime, in Regina a three-man committee of the trades council had travelled to Estevan in October, 1940, and there formed a federal union of grain buyers.⁶⁸ But at home the organizing committee complained that while "organization is sadly needed by all employees and greatly desired by some members of the staffs of various business houses in the City" there was a problem in that "there are too few who really understand the meaning of unity, and those who do are reticent about taking a leading role in efforts to bring about an organization."⁶⁹ But while this was a statement of fact, it was a situation they hoped to do something about. Thus, in November, 1940, the Regina council began an intensive organizing campaign and even acquired a typewriter for the purpose.⁷⁰

The first significant group to respond to Regina's organizing committee was the retail clerks from a number of grocery and department stores early in 1941. Despite intimidation and dismissals, especially from the management of Army and Navy, local 490 of the Retail Clerks'

International Protective Association was formed.⁷¹ At the same time the committee reported progress with some of the city's automotive mechanics and office workers.

In 1942 the Organizing Committee of the Regina council was instrumental in getting a charter for the beer parlour employees, and in 1943 it turned its attention to the workers at the Burns packing plant, but after several weeks work it was decided that "conditions were not too favorable, at the moment,...to cause them to organize."⁷²

In the latter part of 1944 the Regina Organizing Committee began to have better luck in its endeavours, possibly because of the passage of the Trade Union Act by the new government. Through the efforts of Phil Haffner of the Civic Employees, the Regina City Policemen's Association No. 155 was formed and a contract signed in August. At the same time hope was expressed for the employees of the provincial telephone system, the bakers, the caretakers in the city's apartment blocks, and the unskilled working at the General Hospital.⁷³ In September, charters were sent from the TLC to the Regina Caretakers' and Elevator Operators' Federal Union No. 175, and the Hospital Employees, and before the end of the year Haffner was at work among the city's truckers, the Greyhound employees, beauticians and oil workers, with the possibility of success in all cases.⁷⁴ In the new year he was able to report that the employees of the local box factory had been organized, and that overtures were being made to employees of one of Regina's radio stations.⁷⁵

The apparent rush to the TLC colours, while impressive, was almost wholly self-sustaining and self-perpetuating. Thus, when compared with the frenzied organizing activities carried on in Saskatchewan

by the CCL's organizers, together with those of the CIO affiliated internationals, the efforts of the established movement appeared pale and ineffective. From the view of those most intimately involved with organization it seemed to be an opportunity lost. The result was first frustration with, and later antagonism toward, the central body and the internationals for their indifference by allowing the traditional disparities to become so obvious.

As early as 1937 there was grumbling from within the Saskatchewan TLC movement that the Congress should take a more active role in organization work.⁷⁶ By 1939, the sentiment had reached the stage of a national ground-swell with no less than twenty resolutions advocating an aggressive organization policy being presented to the annual convention.⁷⁷ Realizing that it had been backed into a corner, the Congress's executive committee agreed to establish a definite policy along with representatives of the internationals "so far as it is consistent with existing conditions and means at their disposal."⁷⁸

Apparently conditions were not right, and there were insufficient means as far as Saskatchewan was concerned, because one of the few unions organized under TLC auspices, Moose Jaw Packing Plant Employees' Federal Union No. 75, echoed essentially the same plea at the convention two years later.⁷⁹ Thus even this union was lost to the CIO-CCL Packinghouse Workers' Organizing Committee.

The loss of the packing plant local to the enemy early in 1942 was viewed as important because it marked the first significant incursion into the area long dominated by the TLC. From that time until late in 1944, Congress and International representatives did not venture into the province, and any organizing work was done wholly by the local

councils. For example, a new Prince Albert Trades and Labor Council was formed in April, 1944, and a month later the same council was hard at work organizing a local for the Retail Clerks' International Protective Association.⁸⁰

Using the loss of the Canada Packers plant as an example, the executive of the Regina council tried to persuade the TLC to send out a full-time organizer. The argument was that in four different plants--the packing house, a laundry, a flour mill, and a machine shop--the CCL had outmaneuvered the Moose Jaw Trades and Labor Council, and Regina unionists would face the same threat in the near future.⁸¹ The Congress response was that it was a legislative body and that organizing was the responsibility of the internationals.⁸² In the meantime, all the Moose Jaw council could do was issue press releases claiming that the packinghouse and laundry employees had been tricked, and that other unions should be aware of these tactics.⁸³

Frustrated with the Congress's response, the Regina council's secretary, the venerable Bill Cocks, took on the job of volunteer organizer for the AFL until he resigned in October, 1942.⁸⁴ When the council wrote to the Congress to get permission to replace him with another volunteer, they got no reply.⁸⁵ But Cocks' work and devotion were insufficient to keep the CCL out of Regina. In March, 1943, a representative came to town, organizing the garage mechanics, began work on twelve other groups, and was even threatening existing organizations. Thus, Regina and Moose Jaw unionists became painfully aware that a full time organizer was even more imperative "if we are to maintain our position in the Labour movement."⁸⁶

The same gloomy scene was again described to the Congress in

June, 1943, and again Acting-President Bengough replied with an offer of sympathy but little else, because "the revenue received by the Congress from the Province of Saskatchewan is pretty well used up with financing the annual interview."⁸⁷

In 1944 the relations between Saskatchewan labour and the Congress were further strained as the interest of the CCL-CIO in the province's workers became increasingly obvious. Yet, all the local TLC movement could produce in terms of new affiliates came from the spare-time efforts of volunteers. Thus, late in February the Regina council dispatched an inquiry to the AFL to see what financial aid that body could give toward the salary of an organizer. They had given up on a full-time man. The same inquiry was sent to the TLC.⁸⁸ When there was no response after three months, the council again wrote both the AFL and TLC "demanding answers to our letters and that Bro. Carl Berg [who was rumoured to be somewhere in Western Canada] be sent to put in his share of time in this province."⁸⁹ They were getting desperate, and when there was still no response by August, the council resolved to bring the matter up at the next annual convention.⁹⁰ In presenting their resolution the council attached the following unofficial censure:

In so far as the Province of Saskatchewan is concerned, we, the members of the International Trade Union Movement, as represented by the Trades Congress, have, by our elected representatives been very badly neglected in regard to the assistance required from the Executive by our part of the organization in the Province of Saskatchewan. Had our Executive been alive and on their toes, between us we could have added hundreds to our ranks and by this time we could have supported an organization of our own. Other union organizations have done considerable of this work, the only reason being, they had several men working here full time.⁹¹

Perhaps on orders from headquarters, Berg did show up briefly in Saskatchewan, but only to supervise the affiliation of the long-established Saskatchewan Government Services Association⁹² in September, just before the convention. Thus when the Saskatchewan delegation rose to criticize the Congress executive for its discrimination against Saskatchewan, especially when it was reported that there were three TLC and twelve AFL organizers working in Canada, Bengough was able to say that Berg had been instrumental in bringing 2,400 civil servants into the Congress,⁹³ and that the criticism was thus unfair.

While at the convention the Saskatchewan delegates realized that they all faced the same problems in regard to the CCL-CIO and that they were getting the same response from the Congress. The Prince Albert council had complained at length in July to anyone who would listen about the fact that the enemy was very active among lumber workers in the area.⁹⁴ Similarly, the Moose Jaw and Saskatoon councils carried on organization work solely on the strength of their own resources. The situation was such in 1944 that the suggestion of the four councils pooling their money to hire an organizer was seriously entertained.⁹⁵ But the Prince Albert men contended that on principle the TLC should contribute something.⁹⁶

Their motives were only of the most noble. They wanted every worker possible to have the advantages that accrued from membership in the international trade union movement affiliated with the American Federation of Labor and the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada. Thus it was an angry group of delegates that confronted the TLC executive on the floor of the convention in October, one man from Regina even suggesting that if the craft internationals were not prepared to

organize workers over whom they claimed jurisdiction, then they should be prepared to turn them over to the CIO. To avoid further embarrassment Bengough agreed to meet with the Saskatchewan group privately. Here he promised to take some definite action, either by transferring an organizer from BC or having Berg spend more time in Saskatchewan.⁹⁷ There were even rumours that a representative of the Hotel and Restaurant Employees would be visiting Regina later in the year,⁹⁸ so it appeared that perseverance had paid off.

But the promised organizers did not appear on the horizon. Thus, at a meeting in December the executive of the Regina council suggested that the per capita tax to the TLC and the various internationals be withheld until an organizer was sent.⁹⁹ But it was also readily conceded that retribution would not bring the desired result and that inevitably the gospel of unionism would have to be carried to the workers by themselves or by their competitors. With this in mind the Regina council called together all its affiliates in mid-March, 1945, to discuss ways and means of financing an organizer. In the meantime, all unions needing assistance were told to approach their respective internationals.¹⁰⁰

The gathering of disgruntled delegates, three from each union, decided that with only twenty-six affiliates and with at least \$3,000 needed that a combination of levy plus generous donations was the only answer.¹⁰¹ Meanwhile, the locals worked on their internationals and the councils worked on Bengough. All were equally unsuccessful. For example, the Moose Jaw local of the Carpenters and Joiners complained that the international representative stationed at Vancouver had visited the city twice but on neither occasion did he stay long enough

to do any good.¹⁰² In the meantime, Bengough's response to another Regina plea took the form of a request for more information on groups seeking organization. In reply, the council told Bengough and Carl Berg that there were firms with close to 1000 employees who wanted to belong to a union, but the latter "didn't even go near these places. So, unless an organizer is sent who will do some work it is useless to get these places lined up."¹⁰³

At least the Regina council was finding that its own efforts were getting positive results. By the end of April close to \$1,000 had been donated or pledged by affiliates,¹⁰⁴ and it appeared that Regina was well on the way to its own organizer. In addition, it appeared that the refusal to pay per capita was beginning to have its effect, as no less than two organizers were reported to have been dispatched to Saskatchewan. Thus in June the council again began to pay its dues to the Congress.¹⁰⁵ However, by September they realized that their actions had been premature, because they were still waiting to see the organizers in question.¹⁰⁶ But by this time it was no longer a catastrophe, because on October 2 the council appointed Clarence Wyatt as its organizer at \$1.25 per hour. Perhaps in response the Congress finally kicked in with financial assistance. Wyatt was to receive \$100 of the \$160 collected monthly by the Congress from its federal unions in the city. But in return he was to be responsible to the Congress,¹⁰⁷ a half-way happy solution to a long unhappy affair.

Whereas the period of the war should have brought unity and unanimity because of prosperity, the regional disparities brought to the forefront by the organization issue indicate that the legacy of the period was in fact disunity, dissention, suspicion and disillusionment.

These reactions were fortified by other events as well, the most lasting of which was the reaction of the TLC movement to its competitor.

The breakaway of the CIO from the AFL had caused bruised feelings in the United States, and these were readily transported to the Canadian scene. Soon the CIO, and after 1940 the CCL, were much despised by the TLC and its larger affiliates, much more so than had been the case with the One Big Union two decades before.

From the beginning there were attempts made to heal the rift. For example, at the 1937 TLC convention a resolution was passed urging the new executive to mediate between the two factions. However, president P.M. Draper in his condescending keynote address told the assembled delegates that he wished "both sides to understand that the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada is absolutely supreme within the confines of this Dominion for legislation."¹⁰⁸ At the 1938 convention the Regina Trades and Labor Council presented a unity resolution, because division brought with it the possibility of "disaster to the whole trade union movement in Canada."¹⁰⁹ However, from the beginning of the war the official stand of the Regina council and its counterparts in other Saskatchewan cities on unity and co-operation with the new organization was inconsistent, and dependent apparently on whether a conservative or liberal group had control of the council at the time.

The conservatives, led primarily by men long associated with the movement, or from unions closely tied to their internationals, not only viewed industrial unionism as repulsive but saw great danger in the direct political involvement advocated by many in the CCL. In addition, the apparent Communist influence in the new Congress caused some alarm. Thus, on their inspiration early in 1940 the Regina council

angrily decreed "that in future all communications from CIO organizations or dual organizations be relegated to the waste-paper basket."¹¹¹

They were also responsible for the protest from the council levelled at the Regina Labor Temple Company for renting a meeting room to the CCL's Regina Labour Council early in 1944.¹¹¹ Later, in 1945, when it was found expedient to compare briefs with those of the CCL affiliates before presenting them to the provincial government, the conservatives, entrenched in the TLC Saskatchewan Executive, did so very grudgingly, and were quick to conclude that "the CCL had nothing on the ball at all." In comparison

the A.F.L. delegation made a very big impression on the Government, as was evidenced by the questions asked and answered, and there was no doubt in the minds of all present, including the Cabinet, as to which was the major Organization. The A.F.L. participated in the largest portion of the discussion, and though the C.C.L. was in the same room, both Congresses presented their own briefs and answered their own questions, so that in no way at all could it be considered a joint presentation. Both the quality and quantity of the A.F.L. was very much in evidence.¹¹²

But while the CCL representatives might have lacked finesse in dealing with government authorities, their energy and enthusiasm in the field of organization more than compensated, at least from the perspective of those within the TLC movement who were sympathetic to the CCL and its efforts. The feud in their opinion was childish and futile, and inevitably detrimental to the movement.

To all intents and purposes the CIO-CCL unions had no particular quarrel with the older Congress, either. Although their methods and messianic fervour might have injured the sensibilities of the TLC, the official policy of the CCL executive committee was one of co-operation where possible.¹¹³ With the war, the policy received even stronger

emphasis¹¹⁴ and it was repeated openly thereafter.¹¹⁵

At the local level in Saskatchewan the appeal for co-operation was also made. Thus, in December, 1943, TLC and CCL unions met to protest an increase in the price of coal.¹¹⁶ But the desire became especially evident in 1944 when most of the CCL affiliates were united into labour councils and the realization was made that despite ideological differences they had many problems in common. For example, in February, 1944, the Regina Labour Council approached all of the province's trades and labour councils to form a joint committee to present united ideas in regard to proposed changes in the province's labour legislation.¹¹⁷ Later in the year, Regina's CCL central body again made an overture to its TLC counterparts, this time regarding joint support for a series of lectures on adult education.¹¹⁸

The liberals in the TLC movement responded positively to these overtures. Their concern was not so much with particular labels as with the overall concept of unionism so as to protect those in unions against the unorganized. With the TLC and the AFL internationals reneging on their responsibility in this regard, they saw little reason why they should not co-operate. Hence, the Prince Albert Trades and Labor Council agreed to go along with its CCL counterpart on the adult education programme.¹¹⁹ At the same time, (November, 1944) a joint meeting of Regina's two councils was held "to discuss the mutual problems of labour and find amicable settlements for them." The result was a permanent joint committee with three members from each council which was to meet monthly "to discuss and act on labour's common problems."¹²⁰

With concrete evidence of the benefits of co-operation, the

liberals were quick to condemn the TLC executive in its "continued policy of disunity", urging instead that the Congress use "its utmost efforts to bring about a greater degree of co-operation between the C.C.L. and the T. & L.C."¹²¹ But TLC president Percy Bengough had the last word for the co-operators, when he contended that "if in an effort to get unity with those on the outside we cause division in our ranks all that we accomplish is to make a bad situation worse."¹²² While the co-operation issue was not the cardinal consideration, division there was, and that of a serious nature. Thus, although the labour movement entered the postwar period with greatly increased numbers, they were not all within the same organization that began the process four decades before. Competition bred disunity, and antipathies that began to fester during the war years and were not healed even by the merger in 1956. But by some strange rationale all this was in the name of brotherhood and the fraternity of workers.

FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER VI

¹TLC Executive Board Minutes, Dec. 11-12, 1925 meeting.

²RT&LC Minutes, Feb. 28, March 9, April 26 and May 9, 1938 meetings; also minutes of meeting of committee set up at June 19 convention; RT&LC files, G.E. Dealtry to RT&LC secretary, Feb. 11, 1938, Dealtry to Chambers (telegram), May 31, 1938, Chambers to Dealtry, June 2, 1938, Chambers to H.D. Davis, June 7, 1938, and minutes of Trade Union Antifascist Conference, June 5 and Second Antifascist Conference, June 19, 1938.

³RT&LC Minutes, Sept. 26, 1938, meeting.

⁴RT&LC files, Alma Smith to Chambers, April 11, 1939.

⁵King Papers, C149964.

⁶Sask. Dept. of Labour file I 18, Report of meeting between TLC Sask. Executive and Provincial Government, Dec. 6, 1939.

⁷RT&LC Minutes, Sept. 11, 1939, meeting.

⁸RT&LC files, A.E. Conrad to William Green, June 12, 1940.

⁹Ibid., A.E. Conrad to Fred White, Dec. 11, 1940.

¹⁰RT&LC Minutes, June 10, 1940, meeting.

¹¹Canadian Congress Journal, April, 1942.

¹²RT&LC files, H.A. Dark to all Trades and Labor Councils, March 29, 1940.

¹³King Papers, C133980-4, "Memorandum to the Prime Minister on Co-operation in War Time Activities" submitted by T&LC of C. Oct. 5, 1939.

¹⁴Can. Dept. of Labour Reports, 1942-3, pp. 57-9; 1944-5, p. 81.

¹⁵Sask. Bureau of Labour Report, 1942, p. 12.

¹⁶RT&LC Minutes, Dec. 22, 1941, meeting.

¹⁷RT&LC files, J.E. Gariepy to Cocks, Oct. 31, 1941.

¹⁸RT&LC Minutes, Secty. RT&LC to Min. of Labour, Oct. 28, 1941.

¹⁹RT&LC files, B.M. Stewart to RT&LC, Nov. 10, 1941.

²⁰Ibid., A. Mose (MJT&LC pres.) to Cocks, Jan. 24, 1942.

²¹RT&LC Minutes, March 9, 1942, meeting.

²²RT&LC files, Mose to Cocks, Dec. 3, 1941.

²³CCL Executive Committee Minutes, Nov. 20, 1942, meeting.

²⁴RT&LC files, MJT&LC resolution, Feb. 18, 1942.

²⁵See RT&LC Minutes, June 28, 1943, meeting for a resolution from the Legislative Committee which advocated direct government control over "all industries producing the real necessities of life, that have the Health, Comfort, Wellbeing, and Security of the whole people in this Dominion depended upon them."

²⁶RT&LC files, briefs from RT&LC and ST&LC, n.d. See Chapter IX for more details.

²⁷Ibid., MJT&LC resolution, April 20, 1943, and RT&LC endorsement.

²⁸Ibid., Percy Bengough (TLC pres.) and J.A. Sullivan (TLC secty-tres.) to Exec. Members and Delegates of Affiliated Trades and Labor Councils, Jan. 11, 1944. Five sample resolutions are attached.

²⁹Sask. Dept. of Labour file, I 16(1), copy of resolution by MJT&LC, Jan. 18, 1944, copy sent to R.J. Parker (Sask. Min. of Public Welfare) by MJT&LC sec. A. Tait, Jan. 20, 1944.

³⁰RLO, 1945, Table I, p. 10.

³¹Sask. Dept. of Labour file, I-154, Norman McL. Rogers to R.J.M. Parker, Sept. 9, 1939.

³²RLO, 1945, Table I, p. 10.

³³Sask. Dept. of Labour Report, 1960, Table 30, p. 42.

³⁴RT&LC Minutes, J.I. Jordan (RT&LC V-P) to truant locals, Dec. 28, 1940.

³⁵RT&LC files, MJT&LC to Min. of Finance, n.d.

³⁶Ibid., D. McNiven (M.P. for Regina) to Cocks, June 12, 1941.

³⁷See Chapter VIII for a more detailed discussion of Saskatchewan labour legislation.

³⁸See RLO, 1937, p. 177.

³⁹See Sask. Commonwealth, Oct. 9, 1940.

⁴⁰CCL Executive Committee Minutes, Nov. 4, 1940, meeting.

⁴¹Ibid., Feb. 13-15, 1941, meeting.

⁴²Ibid., July 22, 1941, meeting.

⁴³Ibid., May 12, 1941, meeting.

⁴⁴CCL Proceedings, 1943, pp. 24-7.

⁴⁵CCL Executive Committee Minutes, Oct. 20-22, 1941, meeting.

⁴⁶Ibid., May 12, 1941, meeting.

⁴⁷Ibid., Sept. 13, 1940, meeting.

⁴⁸CCL Proceedings, 1942, pp. 25-7.

⁴⁹Ibid., 1943, pp. 24-7; Canadian Unionist, Dec., 1942, March, April, May and June, 1943.

⁵⁰CCL Proceedings, 1942, p. 105.

⁵¹Ibid., 1943, p. 132.

⁵²Ibid., 1944, pp. 22-5.

⁵³Canadian Unionist, June, 1945.

⁵⁴See Ibid., Nov., 1943 to Dec., 1945.

⁵⁵Sask. Commonwealth, Feb. 10, 1943.

⁵⁶SFL Pamphlet, "10 Years of Growth 1944-1953."

⁵⁷Sask. Dept. of Labour file I 10(1) H.S. Johnstone to A. MacNamara, June 11, 1942.

⁵⁸RT&LC Minutes, May 26 and July 13, 1936, meetings.

⁵⁹RT&LC files, RT&LC to P.M. Draper, Feb. 9, 1934.

⁶⁰RT&LC Minutes, Executive Committee Meeting, March 25, 1938.

⁶¹RT&LC files, copy of Swift Current Trades and Labour News, Jan., 1940.

⁶²Ibid., Anonymous speech, Jan. 22, 1940.

⁶³John Chambers, "A Review of Trade Union Work in Regina," Labor's Realm, 1938.

⁶⁴RT&LC files, John Chambers to Secretary, Central Council of Railway Unions, May 10, 1939.

⁶⁵Ibid., A.E. Conrad to E.A. Orpwood, June 13, 1940.

⁶⁶Canadian Congress Journal, June, 1942, p. 22.

⁶⁷RT&LC files, RT&LC Organizing Committee Report, April 28, 1941; RLO, 1940, p. 148.

⁶⁸RT&LC Minutes, Oct. 28, 1940 meeting. The next year the union was expanded to 500 members with the title Grain Buyers' National Union; Canadian Congress Journal, Oct., 1941, p. 37.

⁶⁹RT&LC files, RT&LC Organizing Committee Chairman's report, Nov. 12, 1940.

⁷⁰RT&LC Minutes, Nov. 25, 1940, meeting.

⁷¹RT&LC files, RT&LC Organizing Committee Report, May 26, 1941; Brief, RCIPA No. 490 to RT&LC, n.d.

⁷²Ibid., March 8, 1943 meeting; RT&LC files, RT&LC Organizing Committee Report, April 12, 1943.

⁷³RT&LC Minutes, Aug. 14 and 18, 1944 meetings; RT&LC files, A Hill to Heseltine, Oct. 17, 1944.

⁷⁴RT&LC Minutes, Sept. 17, Nov. 27 and Dec. 11, 1944, meetings; RT&LC files W.G. Williams to RT&LC, Feb. 23, 1945.

⁷⁵RT&LC Minutes, Jan. 8, 1945, meeting.

⁷⁶TLC Proceedings, 1937, p. 193, Resolution No. 110, from Regina Truckers.

⁷⁷Ibid., 1939, p. 111.

⁷⁸Ibid.

⁷⁹Ibid., 1941, p. 211.

⁸⁰Trades and Labor Congress Journal, May and June, 1944.

⁸¹RT&LC files, Cocks to TLC president, July 4, 1942.

⁸²Ibid., J.A. D'Aoust (TLC sec.-treas.) to Cocks, July 7, 1942.

⁸³Ibid., clipping from Moose Jaw paper sent by the Moose Jaw council's secretary, Andy Tait, to Cocks, Aug. 15, 1942. The writer discussed the situation in 1941-42 with W.G. Davies, presently Executive-Secretary of the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour, who had been intimately involved with the Moose Jaw Packinghouse Workers at the time. His contention was that besides the lack of manpower and financial resources, the TLC's representative, the aging, soft-spoken Carl Berg, a former Edmonton civic employee, had no experience with the industry in question and could not communicate with the young, enthusiastic but poorly paid employees. In comparison, the CIO representatives had the experience and could identify with them.

⁸⁴Ibid., Heseltine to Frank Morrison (AFL secty), Jan. 4, 1943.

⁸⁵Ibid., Reid to Bengough, May 15, 1943.

⁸⁶Ibid., April 13, 1943.

⁸⁷Ibid., Yovanov to Bengough, June 21, 1943; Bengough to Yovanov, June 29, 1943.

⁸⁸RT&LC Minutes, Feb. 28 and March 13, 1944, meetings.

⁸⁹Ibid., June 12 and July 10, 1944, meetings.

⁹⁰Ibid., Aug. 14, 1944, meeting.

⁹¹RT&LC files, Yovanov to P.R. Bengough, Aug. 24, 1944.

⁹²TLC Journal, Oct., 1944.

⁹³TLC Proceedings, 1944, pp. 236-9.

⁹⁴RT&LC files, S.J. Tabbutt (PAT&LC Organizing Committee Chairman) to B.A. Magnuson, July 24, 1944.

⁹⁵Ibid., Yovanov to Sask. T&LC's, Sept. 8, 1944.

⁹⁶Ibid., J.T. Goodwin to Yovanov, Sept. 29, 1944.

⁹⁷Ibid., Heseltine report of 1944 TLC convention presented to RT&LC, Nov. 13, 1944.

⁹⁸Ibid., Berg to Yovanov, Nov. 23, 1944.

⁹⁹RT&LC Minutes, Dec. 11, 1944, meeting.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., Feb. 12, 1945, meeting; RT&LC files, Yovanov to all locals, Jan. 21 and Feb. 16, 1945, Yovanov to Bengough, Feb. 23, 1945.

¹⁰¹RT&LC Minutes, March 12, 1945, special meeting; RT&LC files, Yovanov to all locals, March 17, 1945.

¹⁰²RT&LC files, H.G. Parr to UB of C&J General Secretary Frank Duffy, May 2, 1945.

¹⁰³Ibid., Bengough to Yovanov, April 27, 1945 and Yovanov to Bengough, May 28, 1945.

¹⁰⁴RT&LC Minutes, April 9 and 23, 1945, meetings.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., June 11, 1945, meeting; RT&LC files, Bengough to Yovanov, June 4, 1945.

¹⁰⁶RT&LC files, Yovanov to Bengough, Sept. 24, 1945.

¹⁰⁷RT&LC Minutes, Exec. Com. Meeting, Oct. 2, 1945, and regular meeting, Oct. 22, 1945; RT&LC files, A.E. Hemming to H. Purdie, Oct. 19, 1945.

¹⁰⁸King Papers, C149951-54, Memorandum, Sept. 21, 1937.

¹⁰⁹RT&LC files, Chambers to R.J. Tallon (TLC secretary) Aug. 9, 1938.

¹¹⁰RT&LC Minutes, March 11, 1940, meeting.

¹¹¹Ibid., Jan. 24, 1944, meeting; RT&LC files, W.H. Thompson (RLC pres.) to RT&LC affiliates, Jan. 31, 1944, Heseltine to Yovanov, Feb. 28, 1944.

¹¹²RT&LC files, Minutes to Sask. Executive TLC, March 1-2, 1945.

¹¹³At an CCL executive committee meeting, Silby Barrett "...thought the workers must get together or be driven further apart. Bro. Maclean...pointed out that the A.F. of L. unions had the upper hand in Canada, and they would not wish to take any step which might improve the position of the Congress [CCL]." CCL Executive Committee minutes, Dec. 14, 1941 meeting.

¹¹⁴RT&LC files, A.R. Mosher to Tom Moore, Dec. 18, 1941.

¹¹⁵CCL Executive Committee Minutes, Feb. 9, 1944, meeting.

¹¹⁶RT&LC Minutes, Dec. 28, 1943, meeting.

¹¹⁷RT&LC files, W.H. Thompson to all Sask. T&LC's, Feb. 11, 1944.

¹¹⁸Ibid., J.T. Goodwin (PAT&LC secretary) to Yovanov, Dec. 11, 1944.

¹¹⁹Ibid.

¹²⁰RT&LC Minutes, Minutes of Joint Meeting, Nov. 26, 1944.

¹²¹RT&LC files, Yovanov to Bengough, Jan. 22, 1943.

¹²²Ibid., Bengough to Yovanov, Dec. 6, 1944.

CHAPTER VII

SASKATCHEWAN'S TLC MOVEMENT AND POLITICS, 1905-1945

In any examination of labour's political behaviour one often sinks into a morass of confusion and contradiction. The reason for this is that one spectrum of opinions related to labour and its role in society is placed beside another spectrum comprising a wide variety of opinions on political action as expressed by numerous individuals and groups. One need only scan Martin Robin's Radical Politics and Labour, 1880-1930 to see how badly divided labour was in the political sphere. Happily, however, this discussion concerns itself primarily with the unions and unionists affiliated with the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada and the confusion is thus minimized. Because these men came from international unions affiliated with the American Federation of Labor, the gospel of Samuel Gompers was ever present. However, the fact that the first generation of union men in the province had vivid memories of their British trade union experience did result in some schizophrenia in the political sphere, as the forces of active involvement battled the forces of political detachment. But whatever the aspirations of the advocates of the more active position, their opponents held sway in the realms of federal and provincial politics, leaving only civic involvement to their more politically conscious colleagues, and then only to a limited extent. While ideological commitment (or the lack of it) could be construed as responsible for this situation, in reality the nature of the province's labour movement was more to blame. Its weakness and division meant that the co-ordination

of political activity at all but the civic level was virtually impossible. Thus, generally speaking, the Saskatchewan TLC movement was forced to accept normative political behaviour and labour was never terribly out of step with general provincial political opinion at any given time.

Saskatchewan's TLC Socialists

To generalize on labour's attitude toward direct political action is difficult and dangerous because it ran the entire gamut from left to right. The members of the movement that was established in the years before the Great War were both active and progressive. A surprising number involved themselves in the Socialist Party of Canada as demonstrated by Keir Hardie's observation on his Canadian tour in 1907: "In the East the Trade Unionist has no use for Socialism, and in the West, beyond Winnipeg, only Socialists need apply."¹ So recently removed from active socialist involvement in "The Old Country" they grasped the concept of the class struggle firmly and with conviction.

We, the Socialist Party of Canada...affirm our allegiance to and support of the principles and program of the international revolutionary working class.

Labor produces all wealth, and to labor it should justly belong. To the owners of the means of wealth production belongs the product of labor. The present economic system is based upon capitalist ownership of the means of wealth production; therefore all the products of labor belong to the capitalist class. The capitalist is master; the worker is slave.²

To change the existing economic and social order they read voraciously from the most up-to-date socialist and reform thinkers. They wrote for whatever journal would accept their literary donations. They entertained and carefully absorbed the thoughts of roving gospel-bearers, Regina and Moose Jaw councils even being honoured with the presence of

"Big Bill" Haywood in October, 1909.³ Some like Regina's Bill Cocks, having been overcome by the "word", ventured to speak on street corners on behalf of the SPC until told to move on by the constabulary.⁴ But soon impurities of thought became evident, resulting in schism and frustration as demonstrated by the following comments by Moose Jaw's Edward Stephenson:

Whenever an effort is made to draw moderate socialists and advanced laborites together into a common plan of action which will not interfere with the respective propagandas, the stereotyped phrases of socialism seem to be the stumbling block.

Why is that? I ask the question because the present time seems to be a psychological moment among the labor reform movements in Canada. Most of the local labor parties are passive; the S.P. of C. has had several hard lumps on the rocks recently, and not having changed its canvas, is nearer the breakers than ever before; minor restless independent movements have sprung up here and there and a sympathetic throng awaits the attraction of a feasible, harmonious comprehensive federation. And I ask it because I definitely know that the stumbling block stands like a spectre of the present....

For men like Stephenson the alternatives were clear-cut.

The workingmen of Canada can deliberately constitute themselves in a compact majority of the electorate whenever they take the notion. Or they can form and adhere to as many futile minorities as they please, and philosophize and antagonize to their heart's discontent and others' disgust.⁵

Disgust and disenchantment led to disaffiliation, with the result that the Saskatchewan branches of the Socialist Party of Canada fell on hard times, so much so in fact that the Regina Trades and Labor Council offered the anteroom of their hall to the local branch free of charge, because its members could neither afford nor had need for the hall proper.⁶ But more important than ideological differences as a reason for disenchantment with the SPC by Saskatchewan's trade unionists, was the fact that the initial enthusiasm elicited by the movement's founding fathers had worn off. There was no escaping the economic

realities inherent in a small, weak, organized work force operating out of isolated urban centres in a province where climatic conditions necessitated seasonal employment with long hours. Socialist utopias went the way of the indigenous labour press, and sanguine Labour Day celebrations.⁷ Thus, by the time the SPC rode trade union socialists out of the party for heresy in 1910-11, the creature was all but extinct in Saskatchewan. However, as Gad Horowitz has stated in his recent study of Canadian Labour in Politics, "...the TLC was not socialist, but neither was it anti-socialist....socialism was a minority movement, but it was in the mainstream."⁸ Therefore, vestiges of socialist thought such as public ownership, electoral reform, and state-operated social welfare survived, and reappeared at various times in various forms.

Following the optimistic pronouncements on the inevitable direction in which society was heading during the first few years of the movement's existence, the only times that a significant number of Saskatchewan's unionists advocated radical changes in human values was during times of economic and social duress and dislocation. The First World War had a particularly dramatic impact on Saskatchewan labour in the economic and social sense. The widespread though brief popularity of the One Big Union concept, indicated the desire for change in basic union structure, but implicit in the OBU and its pronouncements was societal change. The evidence presented in the 1919 Royal Commission on Industrial Relations by Saskatchewan's unionists, is indicative not only of the depth of the malaise but also the importance of creating the right kind of society for the postwar world.⁹ Even a recognized conservative like James Somerville of the Machinists assessed the desires of labour as "...nothing short of a transfer of the means of

production, wealth production, from that of private control to that of collective ownership, for they know that is the only solution...."¹⁰

In a similar vein, the Saskatoon and District Branch of the Dominion Labor Party issued its "Reconstruction Program for Canada" shortly after the war, the preamble of which eloquently stated:

Never again must the world be drenched with human blood shed by human hands. Mankind must be freed from the fear of war. Democracy must make the world safe for humanity. Autocracies, whether they be monarchic, military, or financial, must be shorn of power to pass the death sentence on masses of workers. War must be made unprofitable and impossible. Peace, with its myriad of blessings, must become the permanent environment of man.

To ensure this, "reorganization" rather than "reconstruction" of society is essential. There must be a definite break with the past. We must strike out for something new. Our purpose is to reorganize society so that men will be more highly regarded than money, life more esteemed than land, and persons held more sacred than property.¹¹

But reorganizationist sentiment evaporated as wages increased during the twenties, only to reappear in the following decade as a hardier hybrid strain able to withstand the extreme conditions that caused it to germinate. This time, however, the ideological gap between the advocates of reform thought and the rest of society had closed, and change came more easily. As an indication, an increasing number of unionists actively worked for some political group on the left, but the organizations they belonged to and the TLC movement as a whole adhered more or less consistently to the principles of political action drafted long before.

Because of the large amount of autonomy that the international affiliates of the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada had within the central body, much of the inspiration for action in the political sphere came from the United States. Thus, as organizations the unions accepted the philosophy of AFL president Samuel Gompers which was, in

essence, one of replacing political involvement by rewarding friends and punishing enemies at the polls. Many of the unions even spelled it out in their constitutions for their locals to follow.

But the fact remains that the men who made up the local unions had their roots in the British working class, and while the majority of them stopped short of socialism, they did demonstrate their heritage by their early and continuing interest in independent political action.

Federal Politics

From the first convention in 1883, the TLC recognized the fact that as workers they should be represented by "men of their own class," and this was logically followed in 1900 by the formation of a labour party separate from the unions proper.¹² Nothing materialized until the 1906 convention, when, after a lengthy struggle on the floor with the SPC, an executive resolution was passed calling for labour representatives in Parliament for "the direct purpose of conserving the interests of the working people in this country."¹³ After the convention, the provincial executives were instructed to establish branches of the Canadian Labor Party in their provinces which would be made up of unionists but would operate apart from the unions.

It was a combination of curiosity and interest that brought out over a hundred of Regina's unionists to Trades Hall on October 20, 1907, "to discuss the advisability of forming a Regina branch of the Independent Labor Party of Canada." The intentions of such an organization were simple: "...to educate the workers to look after their own interests instead of leaving it in the hands of those who had little in common with them and who were too busy looking after themselves to trouble about the working class." While there was general disenchantment

with the federal Liberals, the real point at issue was the fact that "Sir Wilfrid had practically ignored the labor men of Canada over the Asiatic question." But Oriental exclusion was only one plank in a seventeen point platform adopted that day, that ran from immediate objectives such as an eight hour day-six day week, to more far reaching objectives such as public ownership of all utilities and means of transportation.

After several of Regina's top unionists had spoken about the need for independent politics and the education of the worker, an executive was elected.¹⁴ But in forthcoming weeks even the nucleus declined in number, and the Regina branch of the ILP did not get beyond the resolution stage at that point in time. Thus, at the TLC convention that fall the Saskatchewan executive of the Congress had to report that intensive political activity was out of the question until the movement was sufficiently strengthened numerically.¹⁵

Nationally the 1906 convention produced no results either. Thus, from the beginning the TLC movement in Saskatchewan deviated little from the Congress stance on political activity at the federal level until the forties, when some unions gained sufficient strength and confidence to actually affiliate with a political party.

The second call to the colours by the Congress resulted from the buildup of frustration during the war, and the realization by labour that the federal government was not going to consider labour as part of its counsel. The result was the formation at the 1917 convention of the Independent Labor Party on "the British plan...which would permit united action on the part of trade unionists, Socialists, Fabians, co-operators and farmers."¹⁶ To contest the 1917 Federal General Election, Walter

Rollo of Hamilton was chosen as official leader together with thirty-six candidates from across Canada. Saskatchewan's contribution to this political vanguard was two men, James Somerville in Moose Jaw, and James William Casey in Saskatoon. In addition, Andrew MacBeth in Regina ran with labour support but without official sanction. However, none of them was able to overcome the emotional appeal of Canada's war effort in that election, and all three lost their deposits.¹⁷ However, the 1917 effort was merely a stopgap for that particular election, and in 1921 at Winnipeg the Congress founded an official Canadian Labour Party with the avowed purpose of effecting "...a complete change in our present economic and social system." Toward this end the CLP platform advocated the usual moderate left-wing programme, running from a wide variety of social and health services through electoral reform, direct legislation, public ownership of utilities, nationalization of banking to international disarmament. Obedient as it was, Saskatchewan for a time had one of the four provincial sections which espoused these aims.¹⁸

Although the CLP existed officially for two years after 1921, in fact the TLC began to sour on direct political action in 1922,¹⁹ coinciding with the growing conservatism and apathy in the movement. As a result, the 1923 convention left the labour party autonomous from the Congress, and while it encouraged affiliation the TLC saw its own role as "...the legislative mouthpiece for organized labour in Canada independent of any political organization engaged in the effort to send representatives... to Parliament...."²⁰ This was the stand that the central body continued to take for many years thereafter, and the Saskatchewan movement followed suit, by and large.

Provincial Politics

The statement of policy drafted by the TLC in 1923 in regard to federal political action was essentially the same one that was adopted by the movement at the provincial level, especially in the early years. Not only was the growing trend toward Gompersism after the war a factor, but also the ineffectiveness of the provincial Congress executive in co-ordinating any sort of activity beyond the annual meeting with the provincial cabinet, hampered political action of any significance. But, most important, from the beginning "...so far as the local legislature was concerned, labor had no ground for complaint. What little they had asked for they had got and altogether they had received good treatment."²¹ Thus, the necessary frame of mind was not established and labour voted Liberal as a matter of course in the early years.

The romance between labour and the Liberals became strained during the war with labour's new militancy and with the government's realization that it had grave responsibilities, which on occasion ran contrary to the interest of labour. Also, the master politician--first leader of the provincial Liberals, Walter Scott, was no longer premier, having resigned in 1916. Thus, early in 1917 the president of the Saskatoon Trades and Labor Council was strongly censured by a number of affiliates for holding down a seat on the executive of the local Liberal Club.²² Later that same year the Regina Council passed a resolution forbidding its officials from participating "in any party politics as representing or as an official of this Council unless said politics be that of the Labor Party."²³

Under the labour banner Alex Eddy, a machinist from the

Sutherland railway shops who was to become a perennial labour candidate for the next four decades, made his first start in the political arena in the provincial general election held late in June, 1917. In the same contest another railroader, William George Baker of Moose Jaw also ran. Both performances, however, were flops, Eddy polling a mere 476 votes compared with 2,592 and 1,895 for his opponents, and Baker did little better with his 998 as against 1,621 and 1,328. In 1921 Eddy continued his losing ways. He was joined in defeat by Regina's Harry Perry and a man in Swift Current.²⁴ However, of some consolation, Baker topped a field of five in a two member constituency. From then on he continued to sit for the seat for two legislatures although he altered his label to Labor-Liberal in 1925.²⁵

The war and immediate post-war period produced a number of political organizations supported either by labour alone, or by labour in conjunction with other progressive groups such as the farmers and returned soldiers, all having a totally reformed society as the ultimate objective. Three such bodies were the Dominion Labor Party with an active section operating in Saskatoon,²⁶ the Labour Representation League in Moose Jaw, and Federated Labour Party from Regina, formed in March, 1919.²⁷ The latter two, however, were stillborn, and there was no attempt to breathe life into them, especially in the light of the apathy that resulted from the prosperity of the mid-twenties.

The Saskatchewan Progressive Party, a significant force in the early half of the twenties, made some serious overtures to labour for support.²⁸ Their objectives were viewed as the same in most instances on such matters as public ownership, electoral reform and immigration. Their heroes and spokesmen were the same. J.S. Woodsworth and William

Irvine, both Labor M.P's, addressed Progressive and labour meetings without discrimination.²⁹ Undoubtedly some reform-minded unionists must have had Progressive sympathies, but there is no indication of mass support for the farmers' party by organized workers, either as individuals or as members of an organization. During the years of tranquility and inordinate conservatism, labour in Saskatchewan probably voted along the same lines as everyone else. The majority of them probably became increasingly disenchanted with the Liberals' growing inability to maintain a consensus and they probably criticized the government machine for its blatant use of patronage. Further, because most of them were British in origin and Protestant, and because they generally supported an exclusionist stance in regard to immigration they probably became emotionally involved in the 1929 campaign and assisted in the Conservative sweep of Regina, Moose Jaw and Saskatoon.³⁰ Even Bill Baker lost his seat, although by a narrow margin.³¹ But the inability of the Conservatives to cope with the depression helped to completely reverse the trend again in favour of the Liberals in 1934, and in one more election thereafter.

Saskatchewan Labour and the CCF

While politics in Saskatchewan revolved around what would be considered by a progressive irrelevant issues, in the latter half of the twenties a group of individuals in the province's cities were planning political strategy with a reformist end in view. While some of them were drawn from the ranks of organized labour, they could only rightly be labelled as social democrats. A large number were drawn from the professions such as teaching and the clergy. Taking the old name of the Independent Labor Party which had long since died in

Saskatchewan, but which had continued to exist in Winnipeg, the Regina reformists came together on July 9, 1929, to create a formal organization under the guidance of the recognized mentor of the moderate left in Canada, J.S. Woodsworth.³² Those who agreed to adhere to the platform based on that of the Manitoba ILP included men from the Trades and Labor Council, the local branch of the Canadian Brotherhood of Railway Employees, the One Big Union, as well as members of the general public.³³

Even before the Regina ILP was formally launched its members were planning the formation of a provincial party in September,³⁴ and this was accomplished on the 27th, again under the guidance of Winnipeg, as M.P. A.A. Heaps and MLA John Queen were in attendance to speak to the assembled 300 on the advisability of a co-operative commonwealth.³⁵

The enthusiasm of the Regina ILP was again demonstrated that same summer by the announcement of its intention to host a convention of elected labour representatives from all centres west of the Great Lakes.³⁶ But again the prime inspiration for the Western Conference of Labor Political Parties came from the Manitoba ILP, which sent out the invitations to all recognized labour political groups in the west, and Regina was chosen as the site as only a matter of geographic convenience. In all, eighteen men attended on October 26 and 27 in the Labor Temple--one from B.C., six from Alberta, four from Manitoba and seven from the host province--and after finding grounds for unity agreed to meet again the following July in Medicine Hat.³⁷

The Western Conference met two more times in annual convention as an increasingly centralized labour party, until the meeting in Calgary in 1932 when they joined with political farmers to form the Co-operative

Commonwealth Federation.

In the meantime, the Regina ILP and the Saskatchewan ILP (formed October 24, 1931) were drawing closer to the more politically aware farmers involved with the United Farmers of Canada, Saskatchewan Section, in large part due to the efforts of the socialist secretary of the farmers' group, Frank Eliason. Through his untiring devotion to the principle of farmer-labour unity and through his constant correspondence with J.S. Woodsworth, the highly respected symbol of the left in Canada, the union was consummated at a joint political convention held in Saskatoon on July 27, 1932.³⁸ From this point on the alliance was known as the Farmer-Labor Party for political purposes at the provincial level, although in the cities the branches of the ILP still continued to exist until the 1934 Saskatchewan CCF convention when they became the urban units of the CCF.

As it was initially constituted, a number of prominent TLC unionists became intimately involved with and ran under the banner of the ILP, especially in Regina where such notables as Ralph Heseltine, Harry Perry and Bill Cocks joined with social democrats like M.J. Coldwell and Clarence Fines to form the 1929 version of the party. In Saskatoon, the Trades and Labor Council president, Alex Eddy was similarly involved. While the party concerned itself primarily with civic matters, the involvement of these men was almost total, but as it moved on the one hand toward closer co-operation with the United Farmers of Canada, and on the other toward greater participation in federal and provincial politics through the Western Conference, the TLC men gradually withdrew, leaving the field to the urban reformers such as Coldwell and Fines. While they probably cheered any successes attained by their former partners in arms they

were first and foremost TLC unionists and this appeared to take precedence.

For the TLC political action was bankrupt after 1922, and its leadership moved toward a Gompersian position which argued that political action would only divide unionists who supported all political parties. From 1923 on this position was tenaciously adhered to by the Congress executive up until the war, in spite of the formation of the CCF with its programme advocating many of labour's ultimate wishes.³⁹ But the maintenance of this position was not based solely on the memory of broken dreams. The traditional problem of dual unionism also played a part. From its beginnings in Calgary in 1932, the CCF was associated with the nationalist All-Canadian Congress of Labour through its largest affiliate, the Canadian Brotherhood of Railway Employees, because CBRE president, A.R. Mosher, was an original member of the CCF's national executive. In fact, the resultant TLC antipathy expressed toward the CCF caused Mosher to resign and to keep his support on an unofficial basis. Alas, however, the CCF had been stigmatized as opposed to international craft unionism by the association, although by the late thirties many TLC unionists were coming around to the CCF position as individuals.⁴⁰

While labour organizations like the A-CCL, which were dual to the TLC, supported the CCF they could only be a detriment to the new political party because their size augured against wide trade union support for the CCF. However, after 1937 the rise of the CIO unions in Canada seriously threatened the dominance of the TLC position in Canadian labour circles. The more socially motivated ideology of this new labour group made close contact with the CCF almost inevitable.

But this in turn caused the TLC to draw farther away from open CCF support. In fact, in 1944 the Congress formed a Political Action Committee, the sole purpose of which was to advertise its support for the Liberal government of Mackenzie King in the 1945 General Election.⁴¹ However, this was the last time that the central body espoused the cause of any particular party.

In Saskatchewan the TLC movement followed the lead provided by the parent body only to a limited extent. Initially, however, if Regina was any indication, the executive members of the trades and labour councils fell all over each other in their attempt to avoid direct involvement with any organization that had pretensions of political activity at either the provincial or federal level. Thus, it was a very cautious trio of delegates, all members of the Regina ILP, that ventured forth as fraternal delegates to the first national convention of the CCF in Regina late in July, 1933.⁴² But the severity of the depression in the province, the lack-lustre performance of the Conservatives and the Liberals in solving labour's problems and the general disenchantment of labour with the government's procrastination in implementing effective collective bargaining legislation first caused some individuals, and later some specific unions, to ignore Gomperism as a viable alternative to direct political affiliation.

As can be surmised, the first to make the move toward the CCF were individuals who had been long-standing socialists, or those young unionists organized among such groups as the civic employees. In the latter half of the thirties more and more of these men joined the party, and some even became volunteer organizers.⁴³ However, in relative terms, progress was slow. Part of the problem lay in the fact that the

Saskatchewan Section of the CCF concentrated its appeal during that decade on the aims and aspirations of the farming community where the voting strength was. Although a number of the provincial executive were urban residents left over from the old Farmer-Labor Party, they were general reformers and had little cognizance of the "gut" issues facing organized labour. Thus, scant attention was paid in this agricultural province to the Regina Manifesto's call for

A National Labor Code to secure for the worker maximum income and leisure, insurance covering illness, accident, old age, and unemployment, freedom of association and effective participation in the management of his industry or profession,

or to the resolution passed at the 1937 national convention in Winnipeg calling for

every effort [to] be made by the National Council to facilitate the affiliation of economic groups, such as...trade unions [because] the present temper of the trade union movement indicates a growing realization by the organized workers of the need for political action on their behalf.⁴⁴

Several factors forced a change in this situation. After rural organization had been solidified, the Provincial Section was able to devote more attention to urban problems. Also, the serious movement of the CCL into Saskatchewan in 1941 drew attention to organized labour. Thus, at a meeting of the Provincial CCF Executive in mid-August, 1941, it was found expedient to co-operate more closely with organized labour. Toward this end, prominent labour people known to be sympathetic to the cause were contacted to form a committee on labour problems to propose amendments to existing legislation as well as to prepare new legislation in preparation for the time when the CCF would form the government.⁴⁵

The nine-man Labor Investigating Committee, composed of six prominent unionists and three from the CCF executive, met for the

first time late in October and presented its report on November 1, recommending a variety of legislative amendments desired by labour.⁴⁶ The ultimate result of these recommendations was an eight-point programme announced early in 1942 and directed specifically at labour, which included such long sought-after legislative changes as mandatory "collective bargaining with the labor union selected by the majority of the employees," amendment and extension of application of the Minimum Wage Act and Workmen's Compensation Act, state operated medical care, security of tenure of domicile, extension of debt adjustment to include urban dwellers, and a plan for post war reconstruction without unemployment.⁴⁷ As a further attempt to identify the labour movement with the party, CCF councils of trade unionists were established in the various urban centres to discuss matters of mutual concern.⁴⁸

While these proposals did not bring an immediate rush to the colours, an ever-increasing number of unionists must have realized the direction the political wind was blowing in Saskatchewan. Thus, a number of unionists sought the CCF nomination in urban seats for the election which was expected in 1942. For example, two CNR employees, Reginald Boulton, a machinist and Trades Council president, and William Greengrass, an electrician, won the nomination in the double-member constituency of Saskatoon early in February.⁴⁹ As a further example, W.J. Arthurs, a longtime member of the Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen, did the same in the Melville constituency in August.⁵⁰ When the election was not called after the usual four years it upset labour even more, and allowed the CCF to make further inroads into their ranks. Even the Regina Trades and Labor Council became more sympathetic to the party. In October, 1943, it made a financial contribution to the

CCF Cook Book published to raise funds.⁵¹ The leader of the provincial party, T.C. Douglas, spoke to the council on several occasions over the next few months. On the first occasion, on October 22, 1943, he convinced the council to in turn convince its affiliates to become involved in political action on behalf of the CCF. This brought an immediate response from the Moose Jaw council secretary who asked for clarification because "several have asked me why M.J.T.&L. Council does not fall in line with Regina."⁵²

With such a favourable response a number of unions actually affiliated with the party. By March 23, 1944 there were fourteen, ten of which were TLC affiliates.⁵³ By the eve of the election in mid-June, 1944, the total had risen to sixteen with the same basic ten from the TLC,⁵⁴ and by March, 1945, the number had risen to eighteen divided evenly between the TLC and the CCL.⁵⁵

The actual election of the CCF, and the evidence that it would adhere to its promises in the legislative sphere made a substantial impact on a large segment of the province's labour movement. The Saskatchewan Executive of the TLC openly expressed its appreciation for the Trade Union Act and the Holiday with Pay Act passed during the special session of 1944.⁵⁶ When the government appointed a TLC man as minister of the new Department of Labour they were even more pleased. Thus, when the new premier made a return visit to the Regina Trades and Labor Council in September, 1944, a political action committee was formed to co-ordinate the desire expressed

...that the Regina Trades and Labor Council call upon all local affiliates to set up political action committees for the purpose of moulding political opinion and when electing candidates to public office they lend full support to those candidates who indicate that they whole-heartedly are in favour of the aims of organized labour.⁵⁷

Headquarters, however, was unhappy with the fact that its affiliates were courting heresy, especially when the Congress itself was moving toward open support of the federal Liberal party of which CCF'ers were the most effective critics. Thus, the TLC Western Representative, Carl Berg, made no bones about the Congress's displeasure on visiting the Regina council. However, the council's legislative committee in turn criticized Berg for "attacking our government" because "our relationship with the present government has been quite enviable and the present state of things is embarrassing." A copy of the note was also sent to Douglas.⁵⁸

By 1945 one can assume that a large minority of Saskatchewan's TLC unionists were associated with the CCF in some manner--as individual voters, as part of a union affiliated with the party, or as dues-paying members, active and passive. At the same time, there were still those in the movement who adhered tenaciously to the traditional TLC line on political action. They were joined by those who had always voted Liberal in provincial elections and were not about to change, no matter how appealing the CCF was to labour. The result was friction--between individuals, between individual unions, and between trades councils, and the friction led to suspicion and division within an already weak movement.⁵⁹

Politics in the Civic Sphere

The one traditional area where direct political activity by unions and unionists caused less division and dissension was at the municipal level. This situation was due in part to the fact that civic politics were considered non-partisan, and thus neither the sensibilities of individual unionists nor the constitutions of particular unions would

be violated by union sponsored and supported political action. However, in some ways more important was the fact that as far as Saskatchewan labour was concerned, direct political action at the civic level was the only one for which unionists could maintain a sustained interest, and for which they could organize effectively. The reason for this lies with the strength of the trades and labour councils in the several centres and the fact that they were the only union organizations in the province sufficiently united to pursue even partly effective political action.

One of the recognized roles of the trades council was to deal with matters of importance common to the various unions in the city in which they resided. Because they were directly affected by civic policy both as residents and as recipients of salaries from works projects, the councils took an early interest in the affairs of the city. Further, many on the councils visualized themselves as watchdogs of the public weal, a role they could realistically perform at the civic level. Even though these factors applied, however, the degree of political involvement varied from period to period, and at times from year to year. The extent of economic dislocation was a determinant on occasion, but specific local issues and administrations aroused labour interest at particular times as well. Further, the specific personality of the trades council determined the degree of political involvement.

The first union participation in civic politics occurred in Moose Jaw late in 1906 under the auspices of the local branch of the Canadian Labor Party. Particularly unhappy with the manner with which the local municipally owned power plant was being operated,⁶⁰ the party envisioned a full slate to contest the three openings on City Council

as well as the position of chief magistrate, but only two were nominated, the up-and-coming James Somerville and George Glassford. Their platform demanded the placing of the local hospital under city control, the establishment of a board of health, and the extension of the civic franchise to those who did not pay property taxes,⁶¹ and on its strength Glassford was elected.⁶²

By the following year Regina also had a branch of the Canadian Labor Party, but it did nothing with it, running no candidates, merely meeting every second Sunday to listen to "a series of lectures and debates on current topics of importance to all working men."⁶³ Meanwhile, Moose Jaw unionists in the CLP did their homework by sending away for literature from Great Britain and the United States on civic government with which to strengthen their platform. In addition, each union affiliated with Trades Council delegated one man to the party to do legwork for the 1907 civic campaign. The man nominated to contest the seat vacated by Glassford was a railway carman by the name of Fred Gray, but despite the highpower platform, based on municipal ownership, and a number of local issues he was defeated.⁶⁴

Following this initial plunge, interest in civic politics waned until the pre-war depression struck. The severity of the situation brought out all sorts of unionists to fight for labour's cause. Late in 1913 Robert Heggie, a Boilermaker and delegate to the Prince Albert Trades and Labor Council, got himself elected alderman with labour support. Two years later the Prince Albert council added a second City Council seat to its credit, as well as membership on the hospital and school boards.⁶⁵ In the meantime, in Saskatoon a labour-sponsored mayoralty candidate, H.B. Bailey, was defeated by only thirty-three votes.

The recession in Regina caused the Trades and Labor Council to sponsor four candidates, Bill Cocks, J.S. Brundige (ITU), George Peake, and W.B. Bird (Carpenters) in 1914, but all were soundly thrashed. The following year they consolidated their forces behind Harry Perry of the Bookbinders, and he managed to capture one of the six vacancies on City Council, a seat which he held for many years thereafter. Two years later, in 1916, they added one more member to City Council in the person of James Habkirk. Also in 1916 the Moose Jaw Trades and Labor Council managed to get their representative on the provincial TLC executive, C.H. Chadwick, elected to that city's council.

As the war wore on and western labour's plight became more desperate the advocates of even greater political militancy were pleased. An official labour party was formed in Saskatoon in 1918 under Trades and Labor Council auspices, to select labour candidates for civic office.⁶⁶ A similar party was formed in Swift Current the following year with 100 charter members, and in the municipal elections in December, 1919, its candidate for mayor was elected by acclamation and one out of three of its aldermanic candidates joined him.⁶⁷ Even an obscure little town like Unity elected a labour mayor, probably a local railway man, that year.⁶⁸

Through the decade of the twenties labour remained moderately active at the municipal level. The relative success of its efforts indicates the moderation expressed by the trades and labour councils in that decade, and the resultant acceptance by those residing in the cities. This situation was especially true in Moose Jaw and Regina, where the radicalism of the OBU was eliminated almost completely in a very short time,⁶⁹ and the thinking of labour came very close to that

of the community at large. Every year until 1927 labour in those two cities nominated at least one man for each of the elective bodies, public school board, collegiate board or city council and in most cases at least one was elected. In Prince Albert, labour nominations were more sporadic, but those that ran continued the city's winning ways. Saskatoon followed a similar pattern, although in that city the legacy of the OBU and the Winnipeg General Strike were less easily forgotten, in part because of the less homogeneous ethnic makeup. The advent of the Communist Party-affiliated Workers' Unity League on the scene caused all sorts of bad feeling over the position taken by sitting labour-sponsored men on various issues, thus causing expressions of frustration over the futility of political action.⁷⁰ For this reason, apathy began to plague the movement by the late twenties, and interest even in municipal political action fell off drastically after 1927.

But while interest was waning among the majority, there was a small though significant minority among organized labour that was sufficiently reform-minded to still hope for a labour party in civic affairs. It was these men who looked to Winnipeg for inspiration, who joined with local social democrats and formed the Regina branch of the Independent Labor Party. Under the ILP label, three prominent Regina unionists, Ralph Heseltine, Garnet Menzies and Bill Cocks contested two aldermanic and one school board vacancy in the 1929 civic election held on December 2, but all three lost.⁷¹ In the following year only Menzies ran for the ILP. The Regina Trades and Labor Council ran two of its own candidates,⁷² indicating its growing disaffiliation with the formal labour party over its provincial aspirations. Inevitably, some stayed on as members for the programme which the ILP espoused, but labour in

the organizational sense was not involved.

While the Independent Labor Party did not appear to offer labour the answers it was looking for in regard to political action in the civic sphere, the hardship inflicted on the unions by the depression made most of the membership realize that some manner of political action was imperative to forestall further losses to the movement caused by incursions on their ranks by the unemployed. On the other hand, there was the question of alternatives--actual labour-sponsored action which had been consistently ineffectual, or affiliation with an existing organization with similar ends in mind to create a significant base of support. However, if the latter course was taken, there were immediate problems. In response to the economic dislocation of the decade, members or organizations affiliated with the Communist Party of Canada and the One Big Union had worked their way into positions of leadership in a number of civic action and political groups. Thus organized labour felt that it had to approach these with extreme caution.⁷³ The result was that for the better part of the decade labour political action was indecisive and inconsistent, fluctuating between support and withdrawal.

The first indication that labour was willing to pursue joint civic political action with people of like minds came in June, 1931, with the formation of the Co-operative Labour Party which brought together the Regina ILP, the Regina National Labour Council (A-CCL), and the Regina Trades and Labor Council. The international movement placed Bill Daniels as secretary of the new body.⁷⁴ That fall the CLP nominated four candidates for City Council, but only one was successful,⁷⁵ despite an active membership and a weekly promotional radio programme.⁷⁶ Their ranks on City Council were increased the following

year when A.C. Ellison, a lawyer and prominent social democrat won a by-election for the CLP on the strength of his reputation among relief recipients.⁷⁷ By this time, however, the Regina Trades and Labor Council had said farewell to the CLP, vowing at its April 11, 1932 meeting never to take part in politics or civic affairs again, probably because the CLP was becoming increasingly dominated by such men as Clarence Fines, a local teacher whose interests in trade unionism were peripheral, and Jack Toothill of the CBRE, a union dual to the international movement.⁷⁸ Thus, when the question of reaffiliation was raised late in 1933 it was defeated. However, the fact that there was considerable debate prior to the vote indicated that interest in political action was again asserting itself.⁷⁹

While renewed interest was growing, a conservative brake was applied by the fact that any group seeking support in the cities had to rely more and more on the unemployed, and it became increasingly evident that many of their organizations had Communists in executive positions.⁸⁰ Yet, with deteriorating conditions, even the most conservative trade unionist was forced to admit some sympathy for increased radical sentiment within the movement as "...many of the tradesmen and white collar workers in Regina are becoming partially class conscious and are learning in the field of civic politics to vote for candidates who run on a Labor ticket...."⁸¹ Symptomatic of this trend was the increased influence of such men as John Chambers in the Regina Council, and it was under their auspices that Ellison, now mayor, having been elected on the Civic Labor Association ticket, was invited early in 1936 to inform the council on the structure of the Association, with trades council affiliation inevitably being the underlying intention.⁸²

However, despite the fact that the Regina City Council was by this time dominated by left-leaning individuals, both social democrat and Communist, who courted TLC union support by such acts as the boycott of Purity Dairy during a recognition strike by the Teamsters in April, 1936,⁸³ labour's indecision continued through that year and the one that followed. As a result, the activists had to be contented with token financial contributions to the Civic Labor Association.⁸⁴

The freeze began to thaw in January, 1938, when the Trades Council finally dispatched two delegates to the Civic Labor Association,⁸⁵ but they were removed within a matter of weeks when the Association expressed its intention of running candidates in the provincial election expected that year.⁸⁶ The reason given for labour's action was that partisan politics were unconstitutional for the council and some of its affiliates. However, it promised "...continued support of the Regina Civic Labor Association in their efforts to elect labor men to Civic Office."⁸⁷ For the activists such as Chambers the decision was a disappointment, but all they had to hang onto was the hope that sufficient "...pressure from local subordinate bodies [would] force the Trades Congress and the A.F. of L. to make some alteration in their constitutions allowing Trades Council to give official support to the political labor movement."⁸⁸ Obviously, their concern was with provincial and federal politics, but a change in stance would have a definite impact on political action at the civic level as well.

Reflecting the new direction in the thinking of some of the council, in November, 1938, a motion was presented which sought to rescind the council's traditional stance on political action. However, a vote was postponed until the affiliates were canvassed with the

following questionnaire:

Are you in favor of Trade Unions participating in Civic Affairs by: 1. Affiliation with a party organized for the election of Labor Candidates. 2. Endorsation of Trade Union Members for Civic office by the T. & LC. 3. Co-operation with Civic Labor Association for the purpose of nomination and electing Trade Union Candidates.⁸⁹

Alas, though the executive indicated greater flexibility, the reaction of the affiliates thwarted any grand plans by the activists, although the result was anything but unanimous. Some like the Federated Association of Letter Carriers were wholly for political involvement; others like the Brewery and Soft Drink Workers desired only partial involvement. Of those opposed, the Civic Employees indicated their reason to be the nature of their employment, while the Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen stated that their constitution forbade political action.⁹⁰

The situation remained essentially the same during 1939, although there were indications of a compromise when the council decided to run two candidates to contest the civic elections that fall, but all of the seven men approached to seek the nomination declined for one reason or another. As an alternative the question was again raised of affiliating with one of the organizations already running a slate, but there was so much disagreement that the idea was dropped.⁹¹

Part of the reason for the council's position was that the foremost civic political organization seeking labour support, the Civic Labor Association, had by this time become almost completely controlled by supporters of the Labor-Progressive Party, to the point where not only labour but also the city's social democrats had withdrawn support.⁹² However, in December, 1940, there were expressions of hope from some quarters that the bankruptcy of civic political action could be

forestalled by the advent of "a new organization that would truly represent labor and that would be composed of truly labor representatives." This body, called the Regina Municipal Labor Association and led by C.C. Williams, a prominent telegrapher, and Clarence Fines, hoped that the CLA would refrain from nominating candidates because of its disastrous performance in the two previous elections. With this in mind they approached the Trades Council's executive for support and received it.⁹³ But as the 1941 municipal elections approached it became obvious that the RMLA strategy had been wrong. The Civic Labor Association would not lie down. On October 16th the newer organization nominated a full slate, including several prominent delegates to Trades Council. Four days later the CLA countered with its own candidates although they concentrated on the mayoralty and aldermanic posts and neglected the Public School and Collegiate Boards. Thus, the possibility loomed that both labour parties would be wiped out. To forestall such an eventuality the CLA suggested an open convention of the two but the more moderate body refused, believing that such a convention would not be an accurate reflection of labour opinion. As an alternative, it suggested that both withdraw and that the Trades Council, being the dominant labour organization in the city, run a full slate instead.⁹⁴ But when a delegation from the Municipal Labor Association approached the council on the 28th with the suggestion, they were refused a hearing. The reason given was that the poll taken back in December, 1938, on council participation in civic politics had shown that the majority of affiliates had voted in the negative and that this could not be changed without another referendum.⁹⁵

Their overture to the Trades and Labor Council having been

rejected, the RMLA joined with its competitor to form the United Labor Association in November and managed to elect the mayor and two aldermen.⁹⁶ The marriage was formalized on October 14, 1942, when forty politically interested individuals met to dissolve the CLA and the RMLA in favour of the united organization. While there were members of Trades Council present⁹⁷ and the majority of TLC unionists probably supported the new body thereafter as the least of a number of evils, there is nothing to indicate that the council and the majority of its affiliates changed their stand on formal association before the end of the war.

Admittedly, the emphasis of the discussion of labour and civic politics has been on Regina for reasons of documentation. However, certain general observations can be made about the movement in the province as a whole. While the extent and nature of civic political involvement by TLC unionists varied from centre to centre, depending on the degree of homogeneity in the community at a particular time, the lack of a consistent position seems to have been universal. While both alternatives of involvement--direct sponsorship of candidates by trades councils and affiliation with civic labour parties--were resorted to at various times, it was done only with extreme reluctance despite the non-partisan nature of civic politics. Yet there was always a significant minority that desired political involvement, and their very presence created tension and disunity. Thus, avoidance appeared to be the only solution until such time as labour's interest was threatened to the point that participation was again imperative. But at such times there was another minority holding the opposite opinion resulting in continued strained relations. In fact, except for provincial politics before the

Great War there was little agreement among unionists on a political direction for the movement at any level. Thus, politics and political participation merely acted as further issues to precipitate disharmony.

FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER VII

¹The Voice, Nov. 29, 1907; Paul Fox, "Early Socialism in Canada," in J.H. Aitchison (editor) The Political Process in Canada (Toronto: 1963).

²The Western Clarion, 1905.

³Canadian Annual Review, 1909, p. 307; The Morning Leader, Oct. 4, 1909.

⁴The Morning Leader, Dec. 9, 1907; Labor's Realm, Aug. 2, 1909; United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners No. 1867 minutes, July 23, 1909, meeting; RT&LC Minutes, July 2 and 16, 1909, meetings.

⁵The Voice, Jan. 27, 1911.

⁶RT&LC Minutes, Sept. 17, 1909, meeting.

⁷See Chapters I and IX for a more detailed discussion.

⁸Gad Horowitz, Canadian Labour in Politics, (Toronto: 1968), p. 59.

⁹Royal Commission on Industrial Relations, 1919 Minutes of Evidence, pp. 1037-8, 1059-60, 1139.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 87.

¹¹SA Pamphlet Collection.

¹²Quoted in Horowitz, op. cit., p. 59.

¹³TLC Proceedings, 1906, p. 83.

¹⁴Saskatchewan Labor's Realm, Oct. 25, 1907.

¹⁵TLC Proceedings, 1907, p. 23.

¹⁶RLO, 1917, pp. 40-3.

¹⁷Ibid.; see also Sask. Archives Board, Directory of Members of Parliament and Federal Elections for the North-West Territories and Saskatchewan, 1887-1953, (Regina, Queen's Printer, 1956).

¹⁸RLO, 1923, pp. 201-3.

¹⁹TLC Executive Board Minutes, Jan. 11-13, 1922 meeting.

²⁰RLO, 1931, p. 189 quoted from G. Horowitz, op. cit., p. 61.

²¹Saskatchewan Labor's Realm, Oct. 25, 1907.

²²Saskatoon Typographical Union No. 663 Minutes, Feb. 3, 1917 meeting.

²³RT&LC Minutes, June 11, 1917 meeting.

²⁴TLC Proceedings, 1921, pp. 137-8.

²⁵Sask. Archives Board, Directory of Sask. Ministries Members of the Legislative Assembly and Elections, 1905-1953, (Regina: 1954), pp. 96, 110; RLO, 1925, pp. 27, 191.

²⁶SA Pamphlet file, Dominion Labor Party, "Reconstruction Program for Canada."

²⁷The Morning Leader, March 21, 1919; Turner's Weekly, May 3, 1919; RLO, 1922, p. 217.

²⁸See Turner's Weekly, The Progressive and The Western Producer for coverage of labour affairs as well as pro-labour editorials.

²⁹See The Leader, July 9, 1927 for a report on the Saskatchewan Progressive rally held in Regina, July 6-8, 1927.

³⁰See "The Election in Saskatchewan," The Canadian Forum, Aug., 1929, pp. 374-6.

³¹Baker returned to the legislature in 1938 for one Legislature as a Liberal.

³²The Weekly News, July 12, 1929.

³³Ibid., July 19, 1929.

³⁴Ibid., Alberta Labor News, July 27, 1929.

³⁵Alberta Labor News, Sept. 28, Oct. 12, 1929.

³⁶The Regina Daily Post, Aug. 17, 1929.

³⁷Ibid., Oct. 28, 1929; The Weekly News, Nov. 1, 1929; Alberta Labor News, Oct. 19, Nov. 2, 1929; Aug. 1, 1931.

³⁸SA, United Farmers of Canada (Sask. Section) files [hereafter referred to as UFC(SS)] file B2IX-5 "Minutes First Annual Joint Political Convention held in Saskatoon, July 27, 1932." See file X-3c for correspondence between Eliason and Woodsworth showing the gradual gravitation of the Sask. ILP toward the political farmers in the UFC, assisted greatly by Eliason's efforts. This file along with XII-H143 indicate the role of Eliason in making sure that the Political Directive Board of the Farmer-Labor Group would meet concurrently with the Western Conference of Labor Representatives in Calgary in late July, 1932.

³⁹Gad Horowitz, op. cit., pp. 62-3.

⁴⁰Ibid., 64-6.

⁴¹Ibid., pp. 102-6.

⁴²RT&LC Minutes, June 26, 1933, meeting.

⁴³P.W. Haffner interview, Jan. 14, 1970.

⁴⁴CCF Records, MG-28 IV-1, Vol. 191, file "unions--General 1936-43."

⁴⁵CCF Association (Sask.) Papers, file "Executive 1941-2", Minutes of Provincial Executive meeting, Aug. 23-4, 1941; C.M. Fines to numerous trade unionists, Oct. 6, 1941.

⁴⁶Ibid., P.W. Haffner to Chairman, Sask. Exec. CCF, No. 1, 1941. The committee was composed of A.T. Stone from Saskatoon, John Elchyson from Biefait, P.W. Teeter from Weyburn and A.J. McInnis, A.D. Connor and Phil Haffner from Regina for the unionists, and Tom Johnston, G.H. Castleden and Clarence Fines for the party.

⁴⁷Saskatchewan Commonwealth, May 13, 1942.

⁴⁸Ibid., Sept. 9, 1942.

⁴⁹Ibid., Feb. 25, 1942.

⁵⁰Ibid., Sept. 9, 1942.

⁵¹RT&LC files, Yovanov to Fred C. Williams, Oct. 4, 1943.

⁵²Ibid., A. Tait to Yovanov, Oct. 24, 1943.

⁵³CCF Records, MG28, IV-1, Vol. 72, file "Sask.: Trade Union Relations, 1942-47," "Unions affiliated with the C.C.F. in Saskatchewan."

⁵⁴Saskatchewan Commonwealth, May 24, 1944.

⁵⁵CCF Records, MG 28, IV-1, Vol. 66, A.O. Smith to Sydney Korn, March 23, 1945.

⁵⁶T.C. Douglas papers, 295(7-2), Submission from Sask. Exec. TLC to T.C. Douglas and Cabinet, Oct. 9, 1944.

⁵⁷RT&LC Minutes, Sept. 27, 1944, meeting.

⁵⁸T.C. Douglas papers, 295(7-2), Chairman RT&LC Legislative Committee to Carl E. Berg, Oct. 4, 1944.

⁵⁹P.W. Haffner interview, Jan. 14, 1970; see chapter IX for more details.

⁶⁰Moose Jaw Times, June 1, 8, 12, July 5, Aug. 7, 28, Sept. 18, 28, 1906.

⁶¹Ibid., Dec. 7, 1906.

⁶²Ibid., Dec. 14, 1906.

⁶³Saskatchewan Labor's Realm, Nov. 1, 1907.

⁶⁴Moose Jaw Times, Dec. 3, 1907.

⁶⁵The Voice, Feb. 11, 1916.

⁶⁶Western Labor News, Sept. 13 and Nov. 1, 1918.

⁶⁷Ibid., April 4 and Dec. 19, 1919.

⁶⁸Ibid., Jan. 9, 1920.

⁶⁹See Chapter III for more details.

⁷⁰For more detail on labour's political activity on a year to year basis see RLO, 1922, p. 227, 1923, pp. 210-11, 1924, p. 200, 1925, p. 194, 1926, p. 207, 1927, p. 228; Alberta Labor News, Jan. 10, 1925. For the situation within the Saskatoon council see The Worker, Dec. 22, 1923 and Supra, Chapter III.

⁷¹The Weekly News, Dec. 20, 1929.

⁷²Ibid., Dec. 19, 1930.

⁷³For example, the Regina Trades and Labor Council expressed its sympathy for the objectives of the B.C. Relief Camp Trekkers "as far as work & wages & better conditions were concerned, yet we did not consider it advisable to send a representative of our executive to the meeting which is to be held to night [sic] the 11 of November as we considered that many fascies [sic] of the meeting were political & did not come within the scope of the RT & LC." RT&LC Minutes, Hickling to Geo. Black, Nov. 6, 1935.

⁷⁴RLO, 1931, pp. 189-90.

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 195.

⁷⁶Leader Post, Aug. 12, 1931; The Weekly News, Oct. 9, 1931.

⁷⁷The Weekly News, April 15, 1932.

⁷⁸RT&LC Minutes, Oct. 23, 1933, meeting.

⁷⁹Ibid., Nov. 13, 1933, meeting.

⁸⁰Ibid., June 12, 1933, meeting.

⁸¹John Chambers, "A Review of Trade Union Work in Regina," Labor's Realm, 1938, pp. 4, 6.

⁸²RT&LC Minutes, Feb. 24, 1936, meeting.

⁸³People's Weekly, April 4, 1936, Jan. 23, 1937.

⁸⁴RT&LC Minutes, Oct. 12, Nov. 8, 1937, meetings.

⁸⁵Ibid., Jan. 24, 1938, meeting.

⁸⁶Ibid., Feb. 14, Feb. 28, 1938, meetings.

⁸⁷RT&LC files, RT&LC secretary to RCLA secretary, Feb. 22, 1938, J. Hutchinson, March 2, 1938.

⁸⁸Ibid., Press Release from Chambers, Feb. 3, 1938.

⁸⁹RT&LC Minutes, Nov. 14, 1938, meeting and Executive Committee meeting, Dec. 5, 1938.

⁹⁰RT&LC files, returns from questionnaire.

⁹¹RT&LC Minutes, Oct. 23, 1939, meeting and special meeting Oct. 30, 1939.

⁹²CCF Records, MG 28, IV-1, Vol. 65, file: "Sask.: general correspondence 1933-38," C.M. Fines to M.J. Coldwell, Nov. 17, 1936.

⁹³RT&LC Minutes, Exec. meeting, Dec. 13, 1940, and regular meeting, Dec. 23, 1940.

⁹⁴RT&LC files, J.P. Killeen (RMLA secretary) to Cocks, Oct. 27, 1941.

⁹⁵RT&LC Minutes, Oct. 28, 1941, meeting.

⁹⁶RT&LC files, Killeen to Cocks, Nov. 29, 1941.

⁹⁷RT&LC files, Killeen to all unions and labour councils, Oct. 19, and 31, 1942; Constitution of the United Labor Association.

CHAPTER VIII

ORGANIZED LABOUR, THE SASKATCHEWAN GOVERNMENT AND LEGISLATION, 1905-1945

Labour's interests in the legislative sphere went beyond those of most groups in society because of the varied roles that labour played or visualized itself as performing. For example, members of unions, at least in the early years, saw themselves as the progressive conscience of society, reformist to the core, and thus many of their legislative demands ran the gamut of leftist ideology. At a more pragmatic and personal level many of them saw themselves as protectors of the public weal in the realm of the little things. The lengthy campaign carried on by the Trades and Labor Council in Regina to convince the civic authorities to install public comfort stations is a case in point. But ultimately, the labour unions in the province's cities were created for economic ends, and the aims and aspirations in the legislative sphere reflect the basic self-interest of their group, although the rationale might have been couched in all sorts of high sounding platitudes. Thus, this discussion will emphasize the relationship of organized labour with the provincial government, and the ultimate legislation under which unions had to function.

To generalize, the relationship between labour and government had little impact on the nature of labour legislation in Saskatchewan, except perhaps in the last years of Liberal administration before 1944. The nature of the province's economy was more of a determining factor. Hence, ideas for legislation came from elsewhere and were implemented after they had become law in more industrialized parts of Canada. Even in the administration and amending procedure the nature of

Saskatchewan's economy played a part in the ultimate result, or at least it was used as an excuse for inaction. Labour thus became increasingly and painfully aware that in the view of the government the needs of the urban areas were of minor concern, resulting eventually in a swing away from the traditional voting patterns by labour which in the end assisted in the termination of Liberal hegemony and the resultant passage of legislation more in keeping with the needs of the unions.

The original movement as constituted prior to the Great War had little to complain about in regard to the provincial government and the legislation which it introduced. As the president of the Regina council, Thomas M. Molloy, stated in 1907 "...so far as the local legislature was concerned, labor had no ground for complaint. What little they had asked for they had got and altogether they had received good treatment."¹ They viewed the premier, Walter Scott, as one of their own because he had been a member of the ITU in Winnipeg in 1892. In return, Scott made a special attempt to appeal to labour. For example, on the eve of the 1908 provincial general election the headline on the first page of the government's Leader read: "WALTER SCOTT, TRADE UNIONIST", in bold letters and below it was the statement: "The Premier Himself a Union Man, Is in Full Sympathy and Accord with the Working men of the City and Province--Vote for Walter Scott and 'Boost the Union Label.'"²

When labour met with the government in their annual interview they got the most sympathetic of hearings, and their more sensible requests in the legislative field were eventually granted. When there was a dispute between a contractor and labour on a government project

such as the Legislative Buildings, Scott went to great lengths to see that the right thing was done.³ To assist the government in its efforts to treat labour fairly both in terms of legislation and in regard to government financed projects, as well as to fulfill labour's request for a government agency to provide more reliable statistics on labour and the economy in general,⁴ legislation was passed creating the Bureau of Labour in 1911. Briefly, the Bureau was designed

to collect, assort, systematise and publish information and statistics relating to:

- (a) Employment, wages and hours of labour throughout the province;
- (b) Strikes and other labour difficulties;
- (c) Co-operation, trades unions, labour organizations;
- (d) The relations between capital and labour and other subjects of interest to workmen;
- (e) The commercial, industrial and sanitary conditions surrounding working men; and
- (f) Such other matters as relate to the permanent prosperity of the industries of the province.⁵

The Bureau, labour's single most important government agency, was placed initially within the jurisdiction of the Department of Agriculture under the competent guidance of Thomas M. Molloy as Commissioner. The fact that Molloy was in government service at all itself was indicative of the benevolent view taken of labour by the Scott Government. He had been the first president of the Regina Trades and Labor Council, and in 1909 he had been appointed as Government Fair Wage Officer.⁶ Although some on the left of the labour movement screamed sellout on Molloy's appointment,⁷ Scott's choice was a wise one in the view of both government and labour. Molloy was, in short, the civil servant's civil servant--knowledgeable, fair and conscientious.⁸ He had sufficient prestige in the labour movement and had established a consistent reputation for fairness to the point that the workers

trusted his judgement. For the government he provided consistency and continuity from ministry to ministry as the Bureau of Labour was shuttled around from department to department.⁹ He even served well under the Conservatives from 1929 to 1934 and then continued on with the Liberals until 1939 when he became ill, and was replaced by Harry S. Johnstone. His value as commissioner was demonstrated by the fact that he was constantly on top of the situation, always willing to intervene to effect a satisfactory settlement in any dispute as in the Saskatoon carpenters' strike in September, 1922.¹⁰ He was on first name terms with most of Saskatchewan's labour leaders and thus was able to prognosticate what the Trades and Labor Congress's Saskatchewan executive would present to the government, and thus he was able to arm the cabinet with the necessary information and statistics to backup the government's position. In fact, when labour's impression of the provincial government began to fade during and after the Great War, it was Molloy who kept labour in the Liberal camp because while the "good offices of the bureau [of Labour] are always available to employer and employee alike as a mediator in strikes, lockouts or other labour difficulties"¹¹ in actual fact it was almost solely Molloy's doing that industrial peace was maintained.

Besides the functions of statistical depository and conciliator when needed, the Bureau of Labour under Molloy was responsible for the administration of a wide variety of legislation passed before and after 1911. The territorial period saw little labour legislation of significance outside of a Mines Act and a Masters' and Servants' Act (1904), but with the establishment of the province in 1905 the government had to catch up on legislation long in operation in other provinces.

Further, the formation of the province roughly coincided with the advent of non-railway unions in the province. The first concern of the Scott government appeared to be the establishment of the principle of a fair living wage, at least on jobs involving public money, thus setting an example for the rest of the industry involved. Hence, the Railway Act of 1906 made it compulsory for all railway companies receiving provincial government subsidies or guarantees to pay a "fair and reasonable rate." This principle was later extended to all contracts awarded by any branch of the government, the criterion in each case being the wage generally accepted in the district where the work was being done.¹²

Of less significance but still important to labour were the Mechanics' Lien Act (1907), the Thresher Employees' Act (1908-9), and the Woodmen's Lien Act (1908) all designed to ensure that the employee received his just reward for services rendered.

In the area of working conditions, a piece of legislation that organized labour had long desired was "An Act for the Protection of Persons employed in Factories,"¹³ passed by the Saskatchewan legislature during the 1909 session. The Factories Act was designed to protect employees from the hazards of industry through the establishment of regulations and their enforcement through the use of inspectors employed by the Bureau of Labour. But more important was the fact that the Act also limited the work day for women to ten hours and prohibited the employment of children under the age of fourteen years.¹⁴ While basically benevolent the Act also benefitted labour by cutting down the amount of competition to unionists.

Another significant piece of legislation sought by labour and eventually granted was the Workmen's Compensation Act (1910-11)

which covered everything but agriculture, and gave workers the right to seek compensation for injury from employers despite the fact that the injury might have been due directly to carelessness. However, to remove it from politics the cases had to be brought before a judge and jury with the onus of prosecution lying with the employee. The financial commitment necessary here restricted application until the Act was amended in 1929 establishing a fund for the payment of claims, and a board to hear all cases arising out of accidents.

There were other minor pieces of legislation requested by labour and either accepted or rejected by the government depending on the degree of support the measure got outside of labour, but the Workmen's Compensation Act was the last piece of major legislation passed prior to the war. After 1914 the nation and province were occupied with more important matters. The feeling of neglect was in part responsible for the growing alienation of labour from government during the war and the resultant radicalization of the movement.¹⁵ In addition, the withdrawal of Scott from the provincial scene in 1916 meant the destruction of a valuable link between labour and the provincial government. While his successor, W.M. Martin, was equally astute, he did not appear to have the necessary rapport. The lack of a viable alternative, together with the everpresent Molloy, however, kept labour in the government camp.

An indication that all was not right between government and labour, and that the former was currying favour with the electorate on the strength of labour's late-in-the-war militancy, was the statement by the minister of telephones, C.A. Dunning, that telephone workers striking the provincially-owned and operated utility were being goaded on by a "Bolshevik agitator."¹⁶ In fact, the strike itself caused a great deal

of hard feeling between labour and the government. In addition, even the printers in Regina were upset over the fact that the Government Printing Office was not paying the union scale late in 1917, with the result that a number of other complaints were dragged out and aired.¹⁷ Yet, probably in part due to an attempt to placate labour the provincial cabinet introduced and passed "The Minimum Wage Act, 1919" which fixed "standard Minimum Wages, Hours of Employment and Conditions of Labour for Females" under the administration of a board, a measure sought after by labour for at least two years.¹⁸

On balance the Martin administration tried to maintain the sound principles of broker government established by its predecessor. Because of such legislation, some Liberally inclined labour men even waxed eloquent on the fact that "...its [the government's] record particularly in regard to humanitarian and labour legislation is probably unsurpassed in the history of Canada."¹⁹ While exaggerated, the statement had some validity. Perhaps the best example of this is the manner in which Martin and the cabinet chose to handle the issue of compulsory arbitration, which came to the fore in 1920. While such a measure would have been popular with a large segment of the community, especially in the light of the events of the year before, and was in fact proposed by the then president of the Saskatoon Trades and Labor Council, J. MacRorie Hill, to the Premier, Martin and his minister responsible, Dunning, readily realized that not only was it unenforceable but also that it was not representative of the majority of labour opinion and would be strenuously opposed if even suggested. Thus, Dunning's answer to Hill was

It is the custom of the Saskatchewan Executive of the Trades

Congress representing all the labour interests to meet the Government prior to the opening of each session with their requests for legislation, and you are no doubt aware that the presentation of a case by this body on behalf of organised labour has always been given careful attention by the Government, and in fact practically all the recommendations made in the past by this body have been given effect to. I think, therefore, your best course would be to communicate your suggestion of compulsory arbitration in Saskatchewan to the trades and labour councils of the Province with a view to securing their opinion with regard to the principle involved, and also in order that representations on the subject may be made to the Government by a body representing all trade union opinion in the Province.²⁰

In a letter a month later Dunning continued

There is of course no question that soundness of principle should be the guiding star in connection with any legislation; but the experience of democratic government all down the years has been that legislation in addition to being sound in principle must be practical in its application, and to be effective must be enforceable.²¹

Here in essence was the rationale of the early Liberals in regard to legislation--a pragmatic approach avoiding measures over which even the group most intimately involved was not in full agreement.

On the basis of these pragmatic principles the Liberals governed throughout the twenties. The prosperity on the one hand, and the apathy which plagued the trade union movement on the other, made the job easier, as it prevented a major confrontation between labour and the government. Labour asked for little more than minor amendments to existing legislation, and it got little more than these for its minimal efforts. The only significant legislative changes in the last half of the decade were two in number. The first, which came into force on May 1, 1928, merely provided an administrative structure at the provincial level for the Federal Old Age Pension Act passed a year earlier,²² It was not labour legislation in the true sense, although such a pension had been long sought by unionists. Significantly more important for several

reasons were the changes in the Workmen's Compensation Act which began to receive publicity that same year. Amendments in the Act to make it conform to compensation legislation in Ontario and some other provinces had been requested by the Saskatchewan TLC executive as part of a national campaign as early as 1922.²³ The objective was a "state fund" scheme to replace the existing system which determined payment through court action. Even employers generally were in agreement, especially those who owned or operated small concerns and were thus less able to pay the amounts awarded by the courts. Surprisingly, opposition came from the railway brotherhoods who preferred the system in existence.

To sort out the whole matter the provincial government appointed a commission of five men representing both employers and unionists. For organized labour there was Harry Perry of Regina representing the TLC and L.D. McTavish of Moose Jaw for the railway running trades.²⁴ After sitting in most Saskatchewan centres to gather opinions on the most feasible system of workmen's compensation, the commission presented its report to the provincial cabinet early in January, 1929, recommending that a collective liability system similar to that in operation in Ontario be enacted for all workers in the province except farm help, domestic servants, outworkers and members of the railway brotherhoods opposing the scheme. The new act would be administered by a three man board and would pay a scale of compensation of sixty-six and two-thirds percent, based on the Ontario scale. The scheme was to be financed by an assessment of the employers of labour but for the first few years the provincial government would make an annual grant to cover administration costs. In essence, all the commission's

recommendations were adopted in the new act which came into effect on January 1, 1930.²⁵

By the time the new Workmen's Compensation Act had come into effect the government had changed. Despite the fanfare which accompanied the deliberations of the commission, other issues such as nativism and anti-Catholicism had entered the provincial political picture.²⁶ In addition, labour had become somewhat disenchanted with the highly publicized Liberal machine and generally desired a change. Besides, the Conservatives had promised "improved conditions of employment and higher standards of living for labour...."²⁸ in their provincial platform. But the love affair between the Conservatives and labour, while lacking ardour from the beginning, declined rapidly from that point on. Part of the reason was that the new government was burdened with trying to do something about the depression almost from the start of the administration. In labour's view the only solution lay in greatly increased public expenditure to curb unemployment, while premier J.T.M. Anderson and his Provincial Treasurer, M.A. MacPherson, felt that revival of the economy lay in balancing the budget.²⁹ Another labour suggestion, the six hour day-five day week in the building trades, was also turned down by the legislature although it was supported by the Minister of Labour, Railways and Industry, ex-telegrapher, J.A. Merkley.³⁰ The gradual reduction of the minimum wage by order in council for women covered under the Minimum Wage Act³¹ must have caused further alienation. Thus, when the Conservatives were wiped out in the 1934 provincial General Election the result was cheered by labour who then "...expected some alterations would be made by the Government to better the working conditions of the worker," especially

in the area of the minimum wage.³²

Labour's expectations, based on the good old days when the organized worker and the Liberal government walked hand in hand were short lived. The five year Conservative interlude helped to illuminate the fact that the situation had changed. Since the Scott-Martin years Saskatchewan society had become more sophisticated and the problems of the city were not necessarily those of the country. Further, the depression had made labour more dependent on government for legislation, and the government was not willing to go to such extremes of intervention. In addition, James G. Gardiner or even his predecessor, Charles Dunning, were first and foremost advocates of the Liberal party and did not appear to have the necessary acumen to run a successful broker government. Indications of the divergence of opinion had shown themselves as far back as 1918 with the telephone strike, when there was a general outcry from the province's unionists over the unwillingness of the government to grant a wage hike at the expense of a general telephone rate increase.³³ The intervening years of general good will, however, had forestalled hard feeling, but by the time the Liberals were again returned in 1934, trade unionists, where they existed, were substantially more radical. They were unhappy with the manner in which such pieces of legislation as the Minimum Wage Act were being administered, the complaint being that the minimum laid down became in fact the maximum³⁴ and that the lower fair wages set for rural areas discriminated against the man from the city because he used up his leisure time travelling to and from work.³⁵ As an example of how far labour had progressed in its attitudes, witness the submission made by the Saskatchewan TLC executive to the cabinet in January, 1936, which called for such things as health

insurance based on the National Health Insurance Act in Britain, mothers' allowances, and free treatment of cancer.³⁶ It was a long way from the requests for minor amendments to existing legislation made prior to 1930. Part of the reason for this situation was the changing attitude of the public at large toward the toiler and his status in society, largely because of the New Deal in the United States and the desire of the worker to take advantage of this state of affairs and see legislation regulating union-management relations.

A direct result of this change in thinking, as well as a reflection of greater provincial autonomy in the industrial-relations sphere stemming from the 1925 court decision narrowing the jurisdiction of the Federal Government under the IDIA,³⁷ was the group of Industrial Standards Acts introduced in most provinces between 1935 and 1939. All were patterned on Ontario legislation and all established the principle of extension by government decree of a private agreement.³⁸ The Saskatchewan Act passed during the early 1937 session applied to all occupations except agriculture, mining and government service, bringing them under the Department of Municipal Affairs for the purposes of the Act which was to be administered by the Commissioner of Labour. The province was to be divided into zones and within each a petition from either employers or employees could bring both together in a conference to negotiate an agreement on the conditions of labour in that industry in that zone. To be included within the conditions of labour were such things as the maximum hours of labour per day and per week, minimum wage rates for straight time and overtime, and the conditions governing the latter, and the classes of employees to which these

conditions would apply. After agreement on any or all of these conditions by a sufficient representation of employers and employees, it would be declared binding by order in council for a period of up to a year. To hear appeals employer-employee advisory boards were to be established in each zone and the next step in the appeal process would be the commissioner. Thus, under the Act the first order affecting the carpenters in Regina was approved and gazetted in June, 1937, and came into effect the following month. Subsequently, most of the province's trades and crafts in most of the centres came under the provisions of the Industrial Standards Act.³⁹

Organized labour initially welcomed implementation of the Industrial Standards Act simply because they felt it would encourage organization of unions to meet with employers in the various zones. In fact, this was realized in some instances, as with the barbers in Regina.⁴⁰ Also, the Swift Current Trades and Labor Union was organized under its provisions in January, 1940.⁴¹ However, shortly after promulgation, it became obvious that the Act would be difficult to enforce and administer. Small firms, especially those involved in the building trades, were not competing fairly because they were avoiding payment of civic business taxes.⁴² Thus, labour found that it had to be very vigilant, not only in such matters but also in regard to firms abiding by the Act by posting their schedules. Also as time went on and the Act was taken before the courts it was found to have numerous holes through which employers could escape its provisions, especially when judged by magistrates with anti-union biases.⁴³

To add to labour's problems the Industrial Standards Act became a definite hindrance to the unionization process. Because wages,

hours and working conditions became law after a certain number had reached an agreement, those who were involved with organization work were confronted with "'Why Should I, the Industrial Standard [sic] Act sets our wages!'" when approaching a man to join the union.⁴⁴ Further, the Act was declared "ineffective" because the courts had negated its benefits and thus the Saskatchewan TLC Executive and the Regina Trades and Labor Council were forced to tell the government in no uncertain terms

that drastic alterations to the wording of these Acts [sic], must take place in order to make them effective on all workers and employers or we will be faced with the alternative of allowing the Act to either die a natural death by not taking steps to effect conferences, and thereby allowing it to become inoperative, or to press for its removal from the Statutes of the province.⁴⁵

When changes were not forthcoming by 1942, labour was convinced that

...the present government is not showing any desire to cooperate with labor in making labor legislation effective and by their actions at this session of the legislature have shown that any show of co-operation and pleasant conferences are only with the object of pulling the wool over our eyes so that we shall not see clearly what is happening. That all our pleasant associations are meaningless and will bear no real fruit of accomplishment.⁴⁶

But it was more than a single piece of legislation that caused such despair in the house of labour. Witnessing the benefits that accrued to the trade union movement in the United States from the Wagner Act passed in 1935, the TLC moved to have similar measures passed in each of Canada's provinces. Draft legislation was presented to the provincial executives, and in 1937 Nova Scotia passed a Trade Union Act and Alberta a Freedom of Association Act. Ultimately, with great fanfare Saskatchewan's Attorney-General, T.C. Davis, introduced the Trade Union Act to the legislature on January 25, 1938. There was an immediate howl raised by labour in all centres. Not only did it not

adhere strictly to the TLC proposal but in fact did not even come close to the proposed legislation and thus was dangerous to unions.⁴⁷

The strongest objections raised were against a clause which provided penalties

to any person who, by intimidation, by threat or loss of position or employment or by any other threat, seeks to compel any person to join or refrain from joining a trade union.

While the clause was meant in part to discourage unfair labour practices, it was viewed by labour as a threat to the closed shop because it could be construed as grounds for penalty under the existing wording.

A further complaint from the international movement was against the provision that only Canadian residents could act as spokesmen for Saskatchewan unions. Thus, in the opinion of most TLC unionists, if the Trade Union Act was passed without change that "it will be the biggest joke, that Organized Labour had to contend with in History."⁴⁸ On February 12 a deputation visited the Premier and Attorney-General⁴⁹ and suggested that the name of the bill be changed to the Freedom of Trade Union Association Act as suggested by the Congress, that the closed shop principle be recognized, and that penalties be levied against any employer who refused to bargain collectively.⁵⁰

After the meeting, the Attorney-General informed labour that the bill would be enacted "minus the objectionable clauses which have been protested by the various International Organizations, and that this Bill will not be detrimental to the already established International Organizations or their Officers."⁵¹ As requested, the name of the revised bill was altered to The Freedom of Trade Union Association Act. The disputed clauses concerning Canadian residence for union representatives was removed. Under its terms, which loosely defined

"a trade union as any association or organization of employees" and which made it lawful for these to bargain collectively with their employer through duly chosen officers, the government publicly contended that collective bargaining was at long last guaranteed. The Act declared it unlawful for an employer to intimidate an employee or restrain him from exercising his rights under it. If such were used a fine of from \$25.00 to \$100.00 could be imposed. In addition, the Act made provision for unions to negotiate closed shop agreements if they could.⁵² However, the Act lacked real teeth because there were no penalties for an employer who refused to bargain collectively with a union chosen by the majority of his employees. In addition, it promoted company-sponsored unions by its broad definition of the term "union" as was the case in the Estevan-Bienfait area where all miners at one mine were forced to become members of the company-sanctioned Canadian Federation of Labour, or face dismissal. The province's Commissioner of Labour knew that it legalized "a certain amount of intimidation by employers"⁵³ and so did all the province's unions.

The disappointment and displeasure expressed by labour with provincial legislation in the latter part of the thirties and early forties came from a rapidly changing movement. The advent of the CIO into Canada brought vitality, enthusiasm and competition as well as increased numerical strength, especially in previously unorganized industries. Minor irritations which would have passed unnoticed in an earlier period were magnified and the already deteriorating relations between government and labour were made worse. For example, late in 1940 there were manifestations of discontent with the Workmen's Compensation Board for its alleged objective "...of making money...to

be turned into Government coffers rather than using all money available to protect the workers."⁵⁴ There were also expressions of discontent with the government's education tax when it was first introduced in 1937,⁵⁵ and criticism mounted with the outbreak of war because the tax was not taken into consideration by federal orders-in-council regulating the cost of living and salaries.⁵⁶ In addition, some members of the movement felt that the Liberals were not giving labour proper recognition in respect to official labour representation on government boards and committees of concern to unionists.⁵⁷ Yet, the most significant indication of a maturing labour movement was the increasing desire for a separate department of labour with its own minister. It was something that most provinces had by 1941, and Saskatchewan's unionists felt that they were "...sucking the hind teat" especially when the Regional War-time Labour Relations Boards came into operation.⁵⁸ However, when approached on the subject, the government refused repeatedly to consider it. There was no love lost between labour and Premier Patterson especially, and he continued to use the excuse that he did not want a member of his government to become an arbitrator between disputing parties.⁵⁹

With the deteriorating relationship with the government, labour's expressions of frustration increased, especially in 1942. For example, the Moose Jaw council's president complained to the Regina council in January, 1942, that he could not "...understand the attitude of the Government towards Labour and it sure will not react to their favour in the future by antagonizing labour."⁶⁰ Similarly, the Saskatoon council struck a committee

whose duty it will be to devise some method by which we will

receive some greater recognition from the Government, perhaps there is no such thing as the workers receiving Legislation that will be Fair and just, and it will be a matter of Political action on the part of the Worker that will solve the problem.⁶¹

Their comments however, did not stop at internal complaints. They categorically informed the Premier that the legislation passed in the 1942 session was "not a vital factor", and that amendments to the Workmen's Compensation Act "were for the purposes of administration by the board and do not affect the worker." Thus the Act was "a sham" because "the benefits accruing to labor are of a very minor category and include nothing worthwhile which we are able to thank the government for."⁶²

Yet despite the obvious neglect, hope from labour sprang eternal, especially during the 1943 session of the Saskatchewan House when the inveterate unionist-politician, W.G. Baker of Moose Jaw, the only man on the government side of the House who had any affiliation with unionism, rose and introduced Bill 51 of 1943, "An Act Respecting the Right of Employees to Organize and Providing for Conciliation and Arbitration in Industrial Disputes." The bill, based almost entirely on a B.C. Act, would have effectively repealed The Freedom of Trade Union Association Act and the IDIA as applied to provincial jurisdiction⁶³ by tightening up the collective bargaining procedure already in existence. Provision was made for certification of the legitimate bargaining agent by the government and then the employer was obligated to bargain; refusal or delay of more than twenty-one days were considered violations of the proposed act. The provisions and penalties against intimidation by either employer or union were again spelled out. Further, in the case of a dispute, Bill 51 provided for the appointment of a conciliation commissioner either by application from

either party or by appointment by the minister. His duties would be to investigate the dispute and try to reach a settlement within fourteen days. Failing settlement, the dispute would be submitted to a three man arbitration board. Each side would have one representative and they would have five days to agree on a chairman. Failing this, the government would make the choice. Then the board would have two weeks to deliver an award. Then, if rejected by secret ballot the employees could strike or the employer could lock them out after another two week wait. Thus, in effect there could be a "cooling-off" period of almost eight weeks when both parties to the dispute could become more conciliatory.⁶⁴

Labour cheered for Baker and his bill. The venerable William Cocks summed up labour opinion when he said

Trade unionists are of the opinion that Bill 51 is satisfactory and will prevent many industrial disputes in the future if it is passed as at present proposed. If there are any changes made they should provide for penalties as are embodied in the Wagner Act of the USA.⁶⁵

Contributing to their elation was the fact that labour received "repeated assurances" that Bill 51 would receive safe passage through the house.⁶⁶ Alas, it was referred to The Select Standing Committee on Law Amendment and after this body had heard representations, probably from employers' associations, the Committee recommended shelving the bill until a commission had done a thorough study of "'relations between employers and employees and all matters incidental thereto.'" The House concurred despite protests from the opposition⁶⁷ and the Commission on Employer-Employee Relations was formed under the chairmanship of Chief Justice (and former Liberal premier) W.M. Martin.

During July and August, 1943, the Commission held sittings in

every Saskatchewan city but North Battleford, and it heard oral testimony and read written submissions from almost every conceivable individual who could have been even remotely interested in the subject. The province's trades and labour councils, while condemning the government for the referral of the bill,⁶⁸ duly contributed to the proceedings of the commission and presented lengthy briefs of position and rebuttal, documenting numerous individual cases where disputes could have been prevented and alleged injustices corrected with legislation such as contained in Bill 51.⁶⁹

The Commission patiently listened to everyone and on December 1, 1943, it presented its report, the bulk of which dealt with Bill 51, comparative legislation from other provinces and countries, and the varying opinions of witnesses. Its recommendations greatly narrowed the number of occupations to be covered by the act while at the same time it broadened the definition of a trade union to include a greater variety of associations. No changes, however, were made in the section dealing with compulsory bargaining, primarily because the National War Labour Board had already provided for it. Furthermore, there was no recommendation for the incorporation of unions, despite significant management opinion in favour of such a step, although it did recommend legislation requiring annual meetings for unions at which audited accounts would be presented to the membership. Finally, while not negating the closed shop principle which Bill 51 allowed, the Report moved to discourage the check-off by making it contingent on the permission of each member.⁷⁰

Early the next year the subject of Bill 51 was again raised; there were rumours that it would be high on the agenda when the House met for its 1944 session and labour was prepared to follow its progress

closely.⁷¹ But the Labour Relations Act which resulted merely applied the Dominion Wartime Labour Relations Regulations (P.C. 1003) to Saskatchewan,⁷² and nothing was mentioned about the principles enunciated in Bill 51. By this time, however, the clock had run out on the government as far as labour and in fact most people in the province were concerned. The CCF victory in June, and the flurry of legislation which followed left even labour aghast.

By its very makeup the CCF had an ideological affinity for organized labour and its aims and aspirations.⁷³ However, in Saskatchewan at least, the sentiment remained dormant during the thirties as the party established its strength with the province's dominant economic group. But with the war and the advent of a revitalized movement worthy of political consideration, the CCF began to make serious overtures to labour. Perhaps too, the party sensed the growing disenchantment of labour with the Liberals. But whatever the reason, the two came together more frequently through Labour Investigating Committees and the CCF Council of Trade Unionists to hammer out a labour programme to be implemented in the event that the party was elected.⁷⁴ What finally evolved was a concrete eight-point platform which included not only such things as a peacetime economy without unemployment, a housing programme, a medical care scheme and increased old age pensions, but also involved desired amendments to old legislation like the Minimum Wage and Workmen's Compensation Acts. But most important, and the plank that received first priority, was "The Right to Organize" in which "the CCF will make it mandatory for employers to enter into collective bargaining with the labour union selected by the majority of the employees."⁷⁵ As time went on, the party elaborated on the programme to the point where it

the impression given that the new government was inept in the manner in which trade union opinion was being canvassed, due to the actions and personality of C.C. Williams, the minister in charge, and despite attempts by Communists within the CCL unions to embarrass the new government, the desired legislation was finally introduced that fall.⁷⁸

Administratively the most significant measure, and one which was already a fait accompli because a minister had already been appointed, was the Department of Labour Act, which set up the long sought after separate department to administer a number of pieces of labour legislation. However, the most important labour item on the government's legislative agenda was The Trade Union Act, 1944, which repealed the IDIA, the Freedom of Trade Union Association Act, and The Labour Relations Act and enabled the provincial government to enter into agreement with the federal government for the administration of Dominion legislation within the province. In scope and application it was as sweeping as was intended. Even the provincial government was included within its definition of an employer. At the same time it narrowed the definition of a union to exclude company-sponsored and dominated associations.

In a positive vein, the Act declared "the right of employees to organize, join and assist trade unions and to bargain collectively through representatives of their own choosing." To administer its provisions was a seven-man, government-appointed Labour Relations Board made up of employers, employees, and if the government deemed advisable, members of the general public, all in equal number. The Board was given wide powers to determine the agencies appropriate for collective bargaining, to require employers to bargain with these agencies, to order the reinstatement and reimbursement of an employee discharged

contrary to the Act, to order the disestablishment of company unions and to order any person to refrain from any of a number of unfair labour practices laid down by the Act. There was no appeal from orders or decisions of the LRB, and if its orders were ignored or disobeyed it could apply to the government to have the possession and operation of the employer's business placed in the hands of the Board. In the case of a jurisdictional dispute between unions over bargaining rights, the Board could order a vote after a request for same was made by at least twenty-five percent of the employees. A simple majority of those eligible would determine the bargaining agent. Further, the Act made the check-off compulsory if desired by the employees. In the event of dispute, conciliation and arbitration machinery was provided by the Act, to be administered by the Minister of Labour or by the Board if requested by both parties to the dispute.⁷⁹

Also passed in that session was the Annual Holidays Act which provided that all employees except those working in agriculture or in family operations were to receive two weeks' holiday with pay after each year of employment. In addition, there were several minor amendments to existing legislation. The next year the same was true.⁸⁰

But most important, by the end of 1945 it became obvious that the CCF government was going to back up its legislation. For example, as an employer it signed agreements with the Saskatchewan Civil Service Association (TLC) and the United Civil Servants of Canada (CCL) in August, 1945.⁸¹ Earlier that same year the Labour Relations Board ordered Regina's chief constable, acting on behalf of the Board of Police Commissioners, to refrain from engaging in unfair labour practices by refusing to negotiate with the representatives of local 155

of the Regina City Policemen's Association formed in February, 1944, and certified as bargaining agents. However, the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal and Chief Justice Martin quashed the Board's order.⁸²

The most dramatic example of the lengths to which the government was willing to go was the circumstances surrounding the Prince Albert Box Factory. The CCL had formed a union at the plant early in 1944 and it was duly certified by the Wartime Labour Relations Board for Saskatchewan. However, the company procrastinated for a number of months in reaching an agreement with the union. In the meantime, not being a wartime industry, it came under the provisions of the new Trade Union Act. Finally, negotiations broke down completely in April, 1945, and the union brought it before the LRB. In June the Board reported that the company refused to bargain in good faith and was in violation of the Act. But during a delay in the proceedings the company changed legal owners and all the union men were fired. Thus, the government was finally forced to expropriate the plant under the Crown Corporation Act so as to guarantee that the men got a decent break.⁸³ This single act must have gone a long way toward convincing labour of the government's good intentions.

Although labour in Saskatchewan had to wait until the end of the war to take advantage of the Annual Holidays Act because the federal government deemed it inflationary under the Wartime Wages Control Order,⁸⁴ it still had a great deal to be happy about in view of the events of the previous year.⁸⁵ Yet the fact that the province had "model legislation" in regard to the Trade Union Act and the Annual Holidays Act was atypical, and was motivated in large part by political labour leaders in the East who desired to use these as sterling examples to attract

political support and to motivate similar legislation in more highly industrialized areas. The opposite trend had been true for Saskatchewan in the period 1905-1945 as a whole. Innovative legislation of benefit to organized labour was introduced elsewhere, usually in Ontario or British Columbia, and after it had been in operation for a time it was applied to the Wheat Province, usually with minor amendments to suit local conditions. This trend began with the 1909 Factory Act⁸⁶ and was repeated with every major piece of legislation thereafter until 1944. The reason for this is simple to understand--the nature of the province's economy made it extremely difficult to gain satisfactory legislation. The provincial government never missed an opportunity to stress this fact whenever labour met with the cabinet. For example, they argued there was no little challenge in trying to convince an MLA from an agricultural constituency of the wisdom or necessity of an eight-hour day or a one day's rest in seven act. Similarly, when asked by labour in 1937 for higher benefits under the Workmen's Compensation Board, a member of the provincial cabinet stressed that "we are, as you know, a small industrial province, and have to conserve the fund.... That is what actuates the Board."⁸⁷ The depression only strengthened the government's argument. As Conservative Provincial Treasurer, M.A. MacPherson counselled labour in 1932:

We are just human and are dealing with a situation today that has never been experienced in the world before. You must keep in mind in representing the Trade [sic] and Labor Congress this fact gentlemen--that you represent the Trade [sic] & Labor Congress in the province, 30% only of which is urban & the whole province is depending on wheat as a cheap commodity & today it brings to the producer about 20 to 25¢ per bushel & there is what aggravates your position & ours as well.⁸⁸

For the government there were two solutions, both entailing the passing on of responsibility. The first involved keeping "purely urban

matters[s] only affecting [the] 3 cities" out of the hands of the provincial government. In Premier Dunning's words

There are some things that affect the general public of the province that it is necessary to have provincial law for and there are other matters that peculiarly affect local communities and we follow the experience of the old country of saying that so far as these local matters are concerned we endeavor to allow the local people to decide them and it is very much to the advantage of labour that that is done. If the Provincial legislature composed largely of rural people became interested in settling matters of a local nature you would fare not so well as you have done.⁸⁹

Conversely, other matters in the opinion of provincial authorities were best handled by the federal administration. Thus, in 1924 when asked by labour for an old age pension scheme Dunning argued: "If a great industrial province like Ontario did not adopt it and we did we are practically inviting all the people of that age to come here and get a pension."⁹⁰ The same solution was suggested in regard to any sort of unemployment insurance scheme. As T.M. Molloy explained:

A large percentage of the wage earners of Saskatchewan are subjected to seasonal unemployment as they must engage in two, three or sometimes four different types of employment in order to complete the cycle of the year's work....There is a very high percentage of men who lose anywhere from two weeks' to six weeks' work between these periods of seasonal occupation.... A considerable number can find employment in the province during only one or two of these periods of seasonal occupation and consequently are either idle or move out of the province for a considerable portion of the year....Therefore, it is impossible for any one province and particularly Saskatchewan where employment is highly seasonal to operate an unemployment insurance scheme. The mobility of our western Canadian worker and the seasonal nature of his work makes it imperative that any scheme of unemployment insurance in order to be effective must be under the control of the Federal government.⁹¹

While placing legislative matters of concern to labour under federal jurisdiction appeared to be desirable to some, in fact the trend of legislative interpretation appeared to be in favour of the provinces, and the fact remains that until 1944 the Saskatchewan government did

not appear to be particularly concerned about labour's position. In turn, the lack of effective legislative underpinnings tended to further weaken the movement. However, part of labour's problem lay within the movement itself. Legislative matters were the responsibility of the Saskatchewan Executive of the TLC and this body was at a severe disadvantage in meeting with the provincial government because of the poor communication between its members, due in part to sheer distance between cities. Further, when a national campaign was being pursued by the Congress the local executive was provided with set guidelines to follow from headquarters. However, the TLC failed to provide sufficient background information as well as adequate financial support.⁹² Thus, when quizzed by provincial authorities on the application of a certain piece of legislation to the local scene, Saskatchewan's representatives showed themselves to be uninformed. In addition, as the executive met only immediately prior to its interview with the government its members did not have the opportunity to fully discuss the ramifications of the legislative changes that they proposed. Thus they were at a loss, on many occasions, to back each other up. The only solution appeared to be a larger, stronger and more cohesive movement. Yet, to achieve this they faced a basic dilemma in terms of legislative demands. Premier Patterson summed it up admirably in 1942 in defending his legislative programme from labour's contentions that it was "a sham" and "ineffective":

It has long been recognized that one of our difficulties in Saskatchewan has been that our development has not been sufficiently diversified. Much effort has been expended attempting to encourage industrial development in the Province, but there are certain conditions which tend to increase manufacturing costs and this has always proved a handicap in securing industries. If this handicap is to be further increased by the adoption of labour...legislation with greater requirements than

in any other part of Canada, all our efforts to increase industrial development in Saskatchewan will have been futile. I would have thought that labor would be equally interested in seeing this development take place.⁹³

FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER VIII

¹Saskatchewan Labor's Realm, Oct. 25, 1907.

²The Evening Leader, Aug. 13, 1908.

³See Chapter I for more details.

⁴RT&LC Minutes, Dec. 3, 1909 meeting.

⁵Sask. Statutes, 1910-11, Cap. 8, "An Act Respecting the Bureau of Labour."

⁶The Labour Gazette, Sept. 1908, p. 256.

⁷The Voice, Sept. 3, 1909.

⁸See Alma Lawton, "Urban Relief in Saskatchewan During the Years of Depression, 1930-39," unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Sask., 1969, for an assessment of Molloy as "prompt and helpful" with relief recipients who fell under his jurisdiction during the thirties.

⁹The Bureau of Labour was first formed under the Department of Agriculture in March, 1911. In February, 1920, it became the Bureau of Labour and Industries under a commissioner who was responsible to a minister. In March, 1928, the Bureau became part of the Department of Railways, Labour and Industries but in September, 1934, the department was discontinued and a Bureau of Labour and Public Welfare was created as a branch of the Department of Municipal Affairs. In February, 1944, the Bureau was transferred to the Department of Reconstruction, Labour and Public Welfare but this only lasted a matter of months because in October, 1944, the new CCF government created a Department of Labour with its own minister.

¹⁰Dunning Papers, 14294, Molloy to Dunning, Sept. 27, 1920.

¹¹"An Act Respecting the Bureau of Labour".

¹²Bureau of Labour Report, 1911, p. 66.

¹³RT&LC Minutes, Dec. 3, 1909 meeting.

¹⁴The Labour Gazette, May, 1920, p. 623.

¹⁵See Chapter II for details.

¹⁶The Daily Post, Oct. 23, 1918.

¹⁷Martin Papers, 29798-29817.

¹⁸Bureau of Labour Report, 1918, p. 25, 1919, pp. 24-5.

¹⁹Dunning Papers, Y-11-0, 15009, J. MacRorie Hill to Dunning, April 6, 1922.

²⁰Martin Papers 29997-9, Dunning Papers, 14299-301, Dunning to Hill, Oct. 8, 1920.

²¹Dunning Papers, 14305, Dunning to Hill, Nov. 5, 1920.

²²The Labour Gazette, Jan., 1927, p. 52, May, 1928, pp. 476-8, June, 1928, pp. 588-9.

²³In January, 1922, the Executive Board of the Congress appropriated \$200 for the Saskatchewan Executive "in order that they may secure amendments to their Workmen's Compensation Act." TLC Exec. Board Minutes, Jan. 11-13, 1922 meeting.

²⁴These included the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen, The Order of Railway Conductors, the Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen, the Order of Railway Telegraphers and the Maintenance of Way Employees. The reason given by them for remaining under the old act was that under its provisions they might receive up to 100 percent compensation. As one of their spokesmen pointed out "that under the old Act common law rights prevailed, which meant that the employer was responsible for the acts of his employees. He illustrated the point by stating that if he, as a conductor, sent a brakeman out to flag a train and the brakeman failed to do so, and he as conductor, was killed, his widow could bring suit against the company. He said further that in all provinces... except Alberta and Saskatchewan, the widow would be compelled to sue the brakeman under such circumstances." The Labour Gazette, April, 1929, p. 362.

²⁵Ibid., Feb. 1928, p. 104, April, 1928, pp. 344, 375, June, 1928, p. 562, July, 1928, p. 734, Aug. 1928, p. 818, Feb. 1929, pp. 116, 182, April, 1929, pp. 362, 379-82, May, 1929, pp. 491-4, Jan. 1930, p. 22.

²⁶Patrick Kyba, "Ballots and Burning Crosses," Norman Ward and Duff Spafford, editors, Politics in Saskatchewan, (Don Mills, Ont., 1968), pp. 104-23.

²⁷The Weekly News, June 15, July 19, 1929; "The Elections in Saskatchewan," The Canadian Forum, Aug., 1929, pp. 374-6.

²⁸The Montreal Gazette, March 16, 1928, quoted in S.G.D. Smith, "Politics and the Party System in the Three Prairie Provinces, 1917-1958," unpublished B. Lit. thesis, University College, Oxford, 1959, p. 187.

²⁹Bennett Papers, 350800, Bennett to MacPherson, Feb. 1, 1932.

³⁰The Weekly News, May 19, 1933.

³¹The Labour Gazette, May, 1934, p. 421.

³²RT&LC files, pencilled note, n.d.

³³See Martin Papers, 4415, 42213-42223; Western Labor News, Sept. 13, 1918.

³⁴The Labour Gazette, March, 1930, p. 280; RT&LC Minutes, Dec. 10, 1934 meeting, W.E. Cocks to Minimum Wage Board, Dec. 10, 1934.

³⁵RT&LC Minutes, letter, RT&LC to Federal Government, Feb. 26, 1936.

³⁶Sask. Dept. of Labour file, I 16(1), TLC Sask. Exec. submission, Jan. 8, 1936.

³⁷Employer-employee relations originally fell within the jurisdiction of the Industrial Disputes Investigation Act (1907) which instituted a system of government intervention and conciliation in public utilities and coal mines. When it was upheld by the courts in 1911 it appeared that federal jurisdiction would be expanded into all areas of

labour-relations. Thus, nothing could be instituted at the provincial level. But in 1925 the IDIA was declared ultra vires of the Parliament of Canada and the lion's share of the jurisdiction went to the provinces. H.D. Woods and Sylvia Ostry, Labour Policy and Labour Economics in Canada, (Toronto: 1962), pp. 21-3.

³⁸Ibid., p. 23.

³⁹The Labour Gazette, June, 1937, pp. 635-6, July, 1937, p. 817, Nov., 1937, pp. 1276-7, June 1939, p. 581.

⁴⁰See RT&LC Minutes, 1937 for several references; John Chambers, "A Review of Trade Union Work in Regina," Labor's Realm, 1938, p. 4.

⁴¹RT&LC files, The Swift Current Trades & Labor News, Jan., 1940.

⁴²Ibid., Chambers to Regina Mayor and City Council, June 17, 1938.

⁴³Ibid., C. Warholm to RT&LC, April ?, 1938; RT&LC Minutes, Dec. 27, 1937 meeting; John Chambers, "A Review...." p. 4.

⁴⁴RT&LC files, Speech by unnamed individual, Jan. 22, 1940.

⁴⁵Ibid., Brief from Sask. Exec. TLC and RT&LC, Dec. 6, 1939.

⁴⁶Ibid., RT&LC legislative committee report "1942 Legislation affecting workers," April 10, 1942.

⁴⁷Sask. Dept. of Labour file, I 144, Leader-Post clipping, Jan. 25, 1938, RT&LC Minutes, Executive meeting, Feb. 6, 1938.

⁴⁸RT&LC files, H.D. Davis (PAT&LC) to T.C. Davis, Feb. 7, 1938.

⁴⁹Ibid., Davis to Chambers, Feb. 10, 1938.

⁵⁰Ibid., Davis to Davis, Feb. 7, 1938; Sask. Dept. of Labour file I 144, Leader-Post clipping, Feb. 11, 1938.

⁵¹RT&LC files, Davis to Davis, Feb. 18, 1938.

⁵²The Labour Gazette, Feb. 1938, pp. 124-5, May, 1938, pp. 306-7.

⁵³Sask. Dept. of Labour file, I 144, Molloy to Adam Bell (B.C. Dep. Min. of Labour), Sept. 30, 1938.

⁵⁴RT&LC files, G.L. Williams (opposition leader) to RT&LC secretary, Dec. 30, 1940.

⁵⁵People's Weekly, Aug. 21, 1937.

⁵⁶RT&LC files, MJT&LC resolution re Education Tax, April 20, 1943.

⁵⁷Ibid., W.J. Smith (ST&LC secretary) to Reid (RT&LC secretary), March 3, 1943, A. Mose (MJT&LC pres.) to Cocks, Jan. 24, 1942.

⁵⁸Ibid., Mose to Cocks, Dec. 3, 1941.

⁵⁹Legislative Assembly office file No. 244, p. 20.

⁶⁰RT&LC files, A. Mose to Cocks, Jan. 24, 1942.

⁶¹Ibid., W.J. Smith to Cocks, May 16, 1942.

⁶²Ibid., RT&LC legislative committee report, "1942 Legislation affecting workers," April 10, 1942, copy sent to Patterson.

⁶³GAI, UMWA-18 files, C.A. Scott to Morrison, July 19, 1943; Report of the Commission on Employer-Employee Relations (Sask.), Dec. 1, 1943, p. 9.

⁶⁴The Report of the Commission on Employer-Employee Relations contains a detailed description of the manner in which Bill 51 would operate.

⁶⁵RT&LC files, Addition to brief presented by RT&LC to Employer-Employee Relations Commission, n.d.

⁶⁶Ibid., Reid to Patterson, April 14, 1943.

⁶⁷Saskatchewan Commonwealth, April 14, 1943.

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹RT&LC files, ST&LC and MJT&LC submissions to Employer-Employee Relations Commission, n.d.; "Suggestions Re Bill 51," Labor's Realm, 1943, pp. 24-7.

⁷⁰Employer-Employee Relations Commission Report, pp. 42-64 and Summary of Recommendations, pp. 1-3; The Labour Gazette, Feb., 1944, pp. 145-8.

⁷¹RT&LC files, W.H. Thompson (RLC pres.) to all Sask. T&LC's, Feb. 11, 1944.

⁷²The Labour Gazette, July, 1944, p. 912.

⁷³See Chapter VII for more details.

⁷⁴CCF Association Sask. Papers, file "Executive 1941-2", Minutes CCF Provincial Executive Aug. 23-4, 1911; file "Committees 1941-2", P.W. Haffner to Chairman Sask. Exec. CCF, Nov. 1, 1941, C.M. Fines to numerous trade unionists, Oct. 6, 1944; Sask. Commonwealth, Sept. 9, 1942; R.M. Sherdahl, "The Saskatchewan General Election of 1944," Unpublished M.A. Thesis, U. of S., 1966, pp. 86-7; See also Chapter VII for more details.

⁷⁵The Saskatchewan Commonwealth, May 13, 1942.

⁷⁶Ibid., Aug. 2, 1943.

⁷⁷T.C. Douglas Papers, file 295(7-2), CCF Records, MG 28, IV-1, Vol. 93, file "T.C. Douglas 1936-46", Lewis to Douglas, July 19, 1944.

⁷⁸Ibid., T.H. McLeod to Lewis, July 22, 1944; Douglas to Lewis, Aug. 18, 1944; Lewis to Douglas, Aug. 23 and Aug. 24, 1944; Douglas to Lewis, Oct. 15, 1944.

⁷⁹The Labour Gazette, Dec. 1944, pp. 1447-8, 1542-4; CCF Records, MG 28, IV-1, Vol. 69, file "Sask. government general n.d. and 1940-42," "Notes on Labour Legislation in Saskatchewan."

⁸⁰The Labour Gazette, July, 1945, pp. 999-1003, Aug., 1945, pp. 1207-8.

⁸¹Ibid., Oct., 1945, pp. 1414-5.

⁸²Ibid., July, 1945, pp. 1011-4.

⁸³CCF Records, MG 28, IV-1, Vol. 105, file "C.C. Williams", W.K. Bryden (Technical Adviser to the Minister of Labour) to T.J. Bentley, Nov. 10, 1945, copy sent to David Lewis.

⁸⁴Ibid., Williams to David Lewis, Feb. 13, 1945; file "Sask. government general n.d. and 1940-42", "Notes on Labour Legislation in Saskatchewan", pp. 9-10.

⁸⁵See Chapter VII for the reaction of Saskatchewan's labour movement to the CCF's legislative programme.

⁸⁶The Morning Leader, Nov. 27, 1909.

⁸⁷Legislative Assembly office file No. 215, p. 26.

⁸⁸Sask. Dept. of Labour file I 18, Transcript of meeting, TLC Sask. Exec. and Govt of Sask., Dec. 29, 1932.

⁸⁹Deputy Minister of Labour file #3, p. 29.

⁹⁰Deputy Minister of Agriculture, file X-73, p. 4.

⁹¹Sask. Dept. of Labour file, I 10(2), T.M. Molloy, "Statement for consideration of officials preparing Saskatchewan Government brief to be presented to the Royal Commission investigating Dominion-Provincial legislative and financial jurisdiction", Oct. 22, 1937.

⁹²TLC Exec. Board Minutes, Nov. 29, 1924 and Nov. 30, 1928 meeting.

⁹³RT&LC files, Patterson to Cocks, May 27, 1942

CHAPTER IX

SASKATCHEWAN ORGANIZED LABOUR: THE SOCIAL SIDE, 1905-1945

Inherent and assumed in the term and in the purpose of the union was unity--unity of ideals, action and direction. Much of the ideology, rationale and energy of the movement was devoted and directed toward the attainment and maintenance of this quality. Yet practice over a period of time proved that unity was merely an aspect of the mythology that surrounded organized labour, despite the efforts of a devoted few to make it a reality. The reason was obvious. Whatever the mythology said, it was underpinned, and in some instances undermined, by the fact that the trade union movement was largely voluntary and the volition was provided by its economic raison d'être. Unity, therefore, was an elusive quality, its extent determined largely by economic conditions.

In a similar vein, organized labour at times viewed itself as a movement, and even referred to itself as such. Implicit in the term was a progressive orientation in its standards of behavior and beliefs. As a consequence, in an official capacity at least, Saskatchewan labour espoused a number of causes generally associated with the left in Canada. Yet, contradictions between reform thought and economic self-interest inevitably occurred. The result was some paranoia and disunity, but ultimately the majority of the movement came down on the side of the more conservative position. This trend became particularly apparent

as the personnel of the movement changed through time, being composed more of natives in increasingly secure positions.

The first artisans to become intimately involved with the labour movement in Saskatchewan were men who were especially cognizant of the role of the union not only in the economic life of the community, but also in almost all aspects of the urban centre in which they happened to be resident. As recent arrivals from the East, or more particularly from Great Britain where class lines were more firmly drawn, they assumed that power in these new western communities would be wielded by a capitalist establishment. Their assumption was in large part true, and thus almost immediately organized labour arrayed itself on the other side to act as the protector of the public weal from the abuse of power which labour assumed was inevitable. The long struggle by the Regina Trades and Labor Council to have comfort stations established by civic authorities for the use of all, is one minor case in point. Similarly, the confrontation between the Moose Jaw council and that city's civic administrators in 1906 over the operation of the publicly owned power plant eventually led to court action because of the zealous manner in which the council pursued the mayor.¹ Towards a like end, the trades councils in all cities took a particular interest in political action to balance the influence of those who ran merely as "gentlemen."² But the pursuit of the common good was taken at times to the realm of the ridiculous, as in 1918 when the Saskatoon council, after a careful count, asked City Council and the Retail Merchants' Association to do something about the fact that the number of matches in the fifteen cent box on occasion varied from sixty to one hundred below the stated five hundred.³ Such futile

exercises were rare, however. In fact, by the time such diligence as went into counting thousands of matches was exhibited, interest had long died.

The initial concern with protecting the common good was symptomatic of a movement trying to establish itself in a hurry. Only deteriorating economic conditions quickened the heartbeat again. For example, the problems facing labour late in the war and in the immediate post war period caused unionists to be particularly diligent, their sensibilities having been finely tuned by the obvious inequities of the "system." Thus, when the RCMP confiscated allegedly seditious literature published by Kerr and Company of Chicago from the Public Library, the Regina Trades Council instituted an immediate enquiry.⁴ When the full brunt of the post-war depression was felt in 1921 this renewed interest in all matters of public concern was heightened further.⁵

The dire need for self-preservation in the more serious economic crisis a decade later caused labour to become even more acutely aware of its place in urban society. The obvious lack of money by civic administrators made abuses easier to justify, and labour was constantly flying in the face of city councils on a myriad of matters, most of which were related to the problem of relief.⁶

Inevitably the accusation was made that mere selfish motives were involved, and that labour was only concerned with the threat posed by the unemployed to those who had jobs. However, organized labour not only consistently visualized itself as a vigilante over the common weal, but also as a positive progressive force in society and a vanguard of social change. In fact, early labour, or at least its more vocal exponents, identified themselves with almost all aspects of the left and this was

reflected in most of the causes it espoused. Moved by the sterling example that their own organizations exhibited, and by humanitarianism and a desire for greater individual freedom which could be derived from societal reform and co-operation, they implicitly believed in the popular determination of the direction that society was going to take. Also significant to this ideological position was the social gospel generally held as synonymous with the reform segments of the Methodist, Presbyterian and Baptist churches--a religious philosophy which believed in the perfectibility of man, his condition and his environment through the application of Christian principles to the market place of urban, industrial society.⁷ There was an especially long-lasting affair between organized labour and advocates of the social gospel. As early as December, 1907, the warden of St. Chad's college in Regina addressed the Regina branch of the Canadian Labor Party on "Christ and Social Problems,"⁸ while earlier that month the well known temperance advocate, Reverend E.A. Henry, spoke to the party on the "New Theology" being popularized by Charles Stelzle in the U.S. and R.J. Campbell in England.⁹ The Saskatoon council went one step further just after the first war with the establishment of a labour church and a circuit to be manned by six speakers to carry the gospel to the larger centres around the city.¹⁰ Because of this social affinity the United Church's Board of Evangelism and Social Service gave credit for the contribution "that labour has made and is making to the solution of many of the social and economic problems in which the Church is also vitally interested...."¹¹ Thus, there was a definite intermingling of belief and personnel between all reform groups in Canadian and Saskatchewan society whether they were drawn from labour, social gospel advocates, reform-minded farmers

or social democrats.

While it was suspicious and disenchanted with those who it believed controlled governments, labour along with its confreres on the left, believed that the right kind of government intervening in the life of the individual could bear positive fruit for society. Thus, many unionists had an undying faith in the merits of public ownership and operation of all utilities and services that touched a large segment of the population, and were ideal targets for monopoly control. The reasoning involved was simple to explain:

There is no doubt that municipal ownership is beneficial to the public at large, for all profits would go into the municipal treasury and this would tend towards a reduction in the taxes, which is always welcome to the taxpayer, be he capitalist or working man. The present system of granting franchises, extending in some cases over a long term of years, is not a satisfactory one in many respects, for the company or companies to whom these franchises are granted in nine cases out of ten think of nothing else but how to secure a big dividend. The result is that the general public suffer, while the directors draw fabulous salaries and the shareholders enormous dividends.¹²

For these reasons the Regina council carried on a protracted campaign in 1910 and 1911 over the ownership of the proposed street railway system, and it did not relent until the railway was securely owned by the city's citizens.¹³ This same direction was followed both by the TLC and local labour in regard to numerous utilities and services over many years.¹⁴

Similarly and equally early, labour recognized such matters as the health and welfare of the country's citizens as an important natural resource, and thus worthy of consideration and control by government authorities to remove the profit motive from their maintenance. As the Regina Trades and Labor Council stated in pushing for a universally accessible, free hospital in 1918: "No doubt the above may seem far

reaching but it is now becoming universally recognized that it is the duty of every community to look after the welfare of its sick, as the wealth of a community is measured by its health."¹⁵ The campaign continued unabated from all labour in the province throughout the period under discussion, under the impetus of hospital committees from each council, but it came no closer to realization of its objective, as demonstrated by the fact that state hospitalization and medical care were again requested in briefs to the 1944 Saskatchewan Provincial Commission on Rehabilitation and Reconstruction.¹⁶ Labour had to be satisfied with the fact that public opinion had come a long way, as indicated by the formation of the State Hospital and Medical League which labour duly joined in 1941.¹⁷

The same consistency and continuity of purpose, however, was not evident in the early campaign carried on by labour in support of the temperance, although the welfare of society was also supposed to be at stake. Yet, if one took the pronouncements of labour's leaders at face value, one would assume that all of labour was "dry." For example, the oracle of the international trade union movement and leader of the American Federation of Labor, Samuel Gompers, declared that "the time has come when the saloon and the labor movement must be divorced." He was supported at greater length by AFL treasurer, John P. Lennon who said:

The purpose of the trade union is to raise the standard of living. What about the saloon? Is there a man who will dare to say there is any influence from the saloon except to lower this standard, and make man less manly and women less womanly? I don't know a solitary principle for which the labor movement stands but that the saloon is on the other side of the question.¹⁸

Public opposition by labour to the sale of liquor had its roots in the class struggle. It was in the opinion of some, like the Vancouver typographer-socialist R.P. Pettipiece, that "it's not a question of temperance exactly, but of guarding against men who ought to know better being chloroformed by the agencies of the enemy."¹⁹ Those like Pettipiece who believed in a capitalist conspiracy, had ready evidence of the degradation and hardship that went hand in hand with "booze." As Saskatchewan Labor's Realm editorialized:

Three-fourths of the sin and misery of this world can be traced directly to the influence of strong drink. Idleness, disorder, pauperism and crime exist in some degree at least as a result of the liquor traffic....It has been in the hands of men who have no regard for the health or happiness of the people long enough, and it is now time that the whole business was placed in the hands of men who would have a care for the nation's welfare, and who would conduct the traffic not for the sake of the profit to be derived therefrom, as is the case at present without regard to the welfare of the people, but for the same amount of profit that would accrue from the handling of any other legitimate article of commerce or merchandise, and who should be best fitted for that task than men of clean morals, and righteous hearts--the guides and shepherds of the people, who would be beyond reproach, and who would remain free from the contamination by contact with that traffic, and who have nothing to gain but censure by the propagation of the gospel of "let-alone" which they have recently maintained.²⁰

Because labour wanted government control of liquor traffic, and because labour was generally considered part of the reform element in the community, their support was frequently solicited by a wide variety of temperance advocates, all concerned with the ultimate uplifting of mankind. As early as November, 1907, two prominent Presbyterian clergymen, E.A. Henry from Regina and J.G. Shearer from Toronto, approached both the trades councils of Regina and Moose Jaw to assist in the formation of a Moral and Social Reform Council to unify "...the Christian churches and temperance organizations of the province for the purpose of waging active and aggressive warfare against the liquor traffic."²¹

The reason labour was invited was purely because it voiced support for government owned liquor outlets, a step in the right direction as far as the proposed League was concerned.²² Labour accepted the invitation and found itself in the rarefied company of a group of Anglicans, Presbyterians, Methodists and Baptists, together with the Women's Christian Temperance Union and the Royal Templars. Labour was greatly outnumbered at the gathering and its desire for government control was left behind in favour of a League policy of abolition of the bar, prohibition of treating, sale of liquor only in sealed packages to be consumed elsewhere, and total prohibition subject to local option.²³ For labour the emphasis was all wrong because by leaving liquor sales in private hands it "practically endorse[d] the monopoly of the wholesale liquor business." Disenchanted and feeling misled by the enemies of the bar, labour never again came as close to outright prohibition²⁴ although more overtures were made by temperance advocates on several occasions.²⁵

While rejecting extremes, labour continued to advocate government control. But because of a number of factors, one of which was the desire for sacrifice which came with the war, a plebiscite vote closed liquor stores in Saskatchewan at 5:00 p.m. on December 31, 1916, "never to open again,"²⁶ a decision that was not widely supported by most unionists.

While inevitably a minority of Saskatchewan's unionists supported total prohibition of the sale of alcoholic beverages, the righteous pronouncements of the AFL leadership were viewed by the majority as so much wind. With the mythology of toil went the desire for something stronger than water to slake the well-earned thirst, so long as its

sale was government controlled. Further, the association of alcohol and united conviviality that characterized labour functions was assumed, even if the benefits were at times questionable. For example, after an overly exuberant smoker sponsored by the Regina council late in 1907, that body soberly prohibited the use of "intoxicating beverages of any kind" at similar functions held in Trades Hall in order to protect the council's property.²⁷ The Saskatoon ITU local some years later faced up to a more serious problem by decreeing that any member attending "a union meeting in an intoxicated condition and disturbing [the] meeting be fined \$2.00."²⁸

Well aware of the profitable association between potables and labour, brewing companies were one of the biggest and most consistent advertisers in labour periodicals.²⁹ In addition, most brewery employees were members of the International Union of United Brewery and Soft Drink Workers of America. Thus, with prohibition and other government restrictions, labour lost in a number of ways. As a result, in 1916 the TLC instigated a campaign to convince both federal and provincial governments to allow the brewing, importation and sale of beer stronger than the legislated maximum of 2 1/2 percent proof spirits,³⁰ the reason being that "...we consider it an unnecessary interference with what many workers have come to look upon as a necessity."³¹

The campaign continued unabated after the war. For example, early in 1919 the Prince Albert council voiced the opinion that Canadian beer should have the same alcoholic content as that in Britain, and that its sale be through government stores to do away with the "pernicious party partronage system that had so much to do with appointments in days gone by."³² But prohibition continued through another referendum,

although in 1922 the formation of the Moderation League of Saskatchewan indicated that the tide of opinion was slowly turning. Symptomatic of the change was another plebiscite on July 16, 1924, this time to indicate support for prohibition, and if not whether the populace wanted the sale of beer in licensed premises along with government sale of liquor. Regina labour deemed the vote sufficiently important to ask the government to extend voting hours to accommodate the working man.³³ But the result was only a partial victory for labour, as government control of liquor sales was accepted but licensed premises were turned down. Thus, labour was on the government's doorstep within two months asking for liquid refreshments to be consumed in licensed premises,³⁴ but to no avail.

The question of beer by the glass remained an issue of increasing significance until 1934, when temperance opinion subsided to the extent that the government could safely call for another vote. Again labour joined the battle with enthusiasm, and a conviction strengthened by many bar-less years. But their appeal was not one of indulgence, but rather of moderation and the benefits to society to be derived from a moderate position. Having polled its member unions, and finding only one opposed to "beer by the glass," the Regina council agreed that

Organized labor has consistently supported the sale of beer in small quantities, and in such a manner as to be easily available, holding that such a system would tend to decrease the sales of liquors, with a greater alcoholic content, and would tend to promote temperance among peoples far more than does the intolerant attitude of our opponents. Labor further holds that the present system tends to encourage secret drinking in homes and hotel bedrooms and other public places where people will drink and take chances of being caught. Beer parlors would minimize these evils. Organized labor has always protested prohibitory laws, holding that true temperance is better served by easier attainment of small quantities of lighter alcoholic liquors.... Anything for the betterment of the human race has always originated with the trade unions since their formation.

So much for the moral reasons for change, but in addition to these there are economic ones as well. The change would necessitate a lot of alterations to make buildings suitable for use. This would mean manufacture of materials, business for merchants, and work for our artisans at present unemployed, in addition to the added employees in the hotels of the province....³⁵

This time the forces of moderation prevailed and the 1934 plebiscite resulted in the infamous beer parlour and nothing more was heard from labour until midway through the war when there were complaints of a shortage of beer in the province,³⁶ but the motives here were more basic than principled and a large percentage of the population must have had the same complaint.

Like temperance originally, and later moderation when prohibition had proved itself unworkable, reform of governmental structures and practices was inherent in the ideology and tradition of the left and thus also of the trade union movement. And as with most matters requiring idealism, the sentiment was most enthusiastically expressed during the early days of the Saskatchewan movement.

Much of the thinking in regard to labour's definition of democracy carried over from the American experience where the AFL had had a traditional objective--the achievement of "Initiative, referendum, imperative mandate and right of recall [sic]."³⁷ So too did the TLC which as early as 1892 had "legislated upon" the initiative and referendum³⁸ and in 1899 placed them in the hallowed Platform of Principles,³⁹ Similarly, proportional representation became an official objective in 1899 and remained such through most of the history of the Congress while the other objectives fell by the wayside.⁴⁰

Labour's desire for direct legislation and proportional representation was predicated on the assumption that the producer, the most

important member of society, was being underrepresented in the legislative bodies of the nation, and thus his needs and aspirations were being ignored. As Regina's Labor's Realm editorialized at length, obviously borrowing from the American experience if not from an American journalist:

Direct legislation is essential to self government in complex communities--a necessary element in a true democracy....The fundamental questions are, shall the people rule or be ruled? Shall they own the Government, or be owned by it?...Direct Legislation answers these questions in favor of the people, and is the only measure that can answer them that way, except a miraculous conversion of politicians to wisdom and angelhood.

It makes for political purity, a quality so shamefully lacking in political life. It puts a stop to corrupt legislation and destroys the concentration of temptation which exists where a few legislators can take final actions on franchise, etc....The power of bribery will be infinitely diluted....The lobby will die; rings, and bosses will lose their power; black-mailing bills and franchise steals will go out of fashion....

Better men will be attracted to political life....

It will lessen the power of partisanship....

It will educate the people, intellectually and morally--more responsibility, more discussion of measures and public affairs, wherefore more understanding, more sympathy and civic patriotism, more mind, morals and manhood.

It will elevate the press--voting will turn more on reason, and mud will be less in demand in the political market.

It will stop class legislation and give the people their rights....

It is the open door of progress. Reforms will come as fast as people desire them, without organizing or conquering a political party to carry out each advance, or waiting till the plutocrats and political bosses are ready for the curtain to go up.⁴¹

The desire expressed by labour for direct legislation in the pre-World War I period was in keeping with similar sentiments being expressed by the farming community in Saskatchewan. Thus, in 1912 a Direct Legislation League was formed in the province, dedicated to the initiative, referendum and recall. In response to the opinions in favour of these objectives, in 1913 the provincial government introduced "An Act to provide for the initiative or approval of Legislation by the

Electors," the same to be ratified by the electorate. However, despite the efforts of the League to arouse interest in the subject the vote on November 27, 1913, was a disappointment of the first order, with just over half of the necessary thirty percent of those eligible expressing their opinion. Significantly, the poorest turnout was in the cities, with only 953 of 6,431 voting in Regina, and 624 of 5,243 in Saskatoon.⁴² Thus, one must assume that not even all unionists turned out.

The provincial government also responded to those who desired elections based on proportional representation with an amendment to the Cities Act in the spring of 1920 enabling civic governments to use this means if the electorate so desired. The Saskatchewan Executive of the TLC immediately joined with the Proportional Representation Leagues to institute a campaign to have the necessary by-laws submitted to the burgesses.⁴³ Eventually it became an accomplished fact in all three of Saskatchewan's main centres, and labour benefitted, as in the elections for the 1924 municipal councils, when it placed at least one man in each city by virtue of the new system.⁴⁴ Similarly, labour's desire for a ward system, which was believed to be more representative of area opinion in a given city, resulted in labour party gains at the polls, especially in Regina during the thirties.⁴⁵

In some ways related to the desire for reform of the system of representation to government bodies, was the attitude of labour toward its womanfolk. Like most of the population of Saskatchewan, and indeed of western Canada, labour by and large supported the woman suffrage movement. The impetus in the province was provided by the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association, and by the women themselves through their Political Equality Leagues. Thus, the provincial TLC executive could only come

forward at the proper time in May, 1915, to endorse a giant petition which was to be presented to the provincial government.⁴⁶ But here the reform spirit ended. The unions affiliated with the TLC, with their skilled artisans employed in crafts generally regarded as masculine, tended to be very exclusionist in regard to allowing women into their trades and into their unions, holding them in even less regard than unskilled labourers. An example of this attitude is the position taken during the first war when the Congress argued that women should not be employed in industry until full investigation "had proved that all available man power had been absorbed."⁴⁷ However, this was hardly an issue in Saskatchewan where women, if they held jobs, were in industries usually considered as unskilled and therefore unorganizable. Unionists generally only associated with their wives, and some of these were organized into auxiliaries to the unions and it appeared that their primary duty was to render yeoman service at labour's annual "show" in September. In 1919, however, a group of Regina women formed the Women's Labor League to meet and discuss issues of common concern.⁴⁸ This new women's group was given voice but no vote on Trades Council almost immediately, but it took five years before the League was given full affiliated status.⁴⁹

In 1924 the Leagues in the various centres throughout western Canada began to meet in annual convention as the Labor Women's Social and Economic Conference. Naturally, the majority of its delegates were wives of labour leaders, but there were also an increasing number of professional women, such as Beatrice Brigden of Brandon, and Mrs. T.V. Hanway from the Regina Employed Girls' Council. Their discussions involved numerous subjects of special interest to progressive women and

mothers, such as cadet training, world peace, birth control clinics, and the elimination of war stories from textbooks. In fact, the activities of the Women's Social and Economic Conference highlighted a rather dull decade for labour in Saskatchewan.⁵⁰

In regard to formal association with women as unionists, there was very little as far as the TLC movement was concerned. The nature of the provincial economy kept women out of unions until the organization of such groups as the Civic Employees in the thirties. When the CIO-CCL unions entered the province during the war, they took the lion's share of women workers because of the vertical nature of their organizations, although the TLC also got its share in 1944 when The Saskatchewan Civil Service Association chose affiliation with the older congress.

No doubt labour's attitude toward women workers was in part based on fear of competition from the unskilled. However, until very late in the period this fear had no justification, simply because of the nature of the economy and the character of the organized labour forces. But there is certainly proof that this fear was justified in regard to immigrants, especially those that came to the cities.

As has been stressed repeatedly, the early movement in the province was concentrated in the building trades employed in creating the structural manifestations of an urban economy. But even in the boom years between provincehood and 1913 there was rarely a serious scarcity of skilled artisans, primarily because of the seasonal nature of the industry due to climatic conditions, and because of the itinerant nature of the work force travelling to where the large construction sites were located. The situation, however, was ideal for unionists for the most part, because they felt they could make a just wage to carry

them through the harsh winter. But it was soon discovered that the representatives of management were attempting to create an artificial surplus of labour to keep wages down. With the slump in the economy in 1913 the situation became serious.

The two most blatant examples both concerned gross misrepresentation of the labour situation in Saskatchewan cities. The first involved a Mr. Gunn who had been dispatched by the Prince Albert Board of Trade to Britain to induce skilled men to emigrate on the promise of high wages. However, when they arrived the men either found no jobs waiting or were assigned the task of chopping wood because they "were out a month too soon and the work was not opened up yet." In desperation, some of these unfortunates gravitated to Saskatoon where the situation was equally bad. Finally, the Saskatoon council deemed the problem sufficiently serious to make a grant of \$100 to subsidize an agent to follow Gunn to England and expose his misstatements by standing up at public meetings and speaking out.⁵¹

The second case, quite similar in nature, involved a Mr. W.A. Nichol, also in England as the representative of the Western Section of the Canadian National Association of Builders' Exchanges. The appeal was similar but the approach was smoother with the emigrants, primarily bricklayers and masons, being given work tickets before departure. On arrival in a designated city in western Canada they would present their ticket to the secretary of the local Builders' Exchange and he would place them with a contractor. But after two days they would be dismissed because "...he only had a two day ticket." The cities were thus filled with idle bricklayers and masons, adding to an already serious labour surplus.⁵² The situation was such that the federal Immigration Branch

was forced to inform agents in the field of the situation,⁵³ but not before the government was caused no little embarrassment.

The events surrounding Messrs. Gunn and Nichol were not isolated incidents, but rather the most serious examples of a situation which dated back to the founding of the movement. For example, in June, 1907, Regina carpenters complained vigorously about contractors advertising in the East about a labour shortage when there was ample evidence to the contrary.⁵⁴ Thus labour was consistently dubious and constantly critical of any sponsored attempts to bring in immigrants for any destination in Canada. Such benevolent organizations as the Salvation Army, for example, were openly criticized by Saskatchewan unionists for their practice before the First World War of sponsoring the immigration of farm workers.⁵⁵ However, the Army finally saw the error of its ways and concentrated its efforts on female domestics.⁵⁶ Similarly, both federal and provincial governments came under criticism for assisting such schemes, as well as subsidizing a number of other ventures designed, in labour's view, to inflate the work force.

Year after year the number of farm laborers and others flocking into the cities increases. The inspiring patriotic cry "Back to the land" falls on deaf ears. If the farmers are unable to keep their own sons on the land there is very little hope of the charms of country life appealing to the army of immigrants who are flocking to Canada each year, who have little if any experience of farm life and who spent the greater part of their lives in the large cities of the old countries....This population naturally gravitates to the larger cities where the remuneration per hour is more than that on the farm....⁵⁷

In certain years the situation was serious to the point that only the need for large numbers of men to harvest the crop relieved the cities.⁵⁸ Yet this in itself caused problems, because the annual harvest brought more able-bodied men with government assistance flocking to the

cities for the winter.⁵⁹ The Congress was finally forced to protest to the federal government at its 1923 Convention, and demanded that it make provision for their return to their homes.⁶⁰ Thus, labour's policy was "based on the belief in the right of free movements of people where no false inducement, subsidies, or similar methods were employed to persuade people to emigrate."⁶¹

But even the principle of "free movements of people" was not allowed to apply to one particular segment of the world population, namely those of Oriental birth. But obviously the problem lay elsewhere than the Canadian prairies. In fact, the hard feelings that organized labour developed toward East Asians had their origins in California in the 1860's, and from there an extremely emotional fear of the "Yellow Peril" spread throughout the entire North American labour movement.⁶² Although there was little reason for fearing Orientals in any province but British Columbia, the TLC and Saskatchewan labour took up the cause. Editorials were written from ignorance on the unsavory nature of the Oriental:

How would you like to smoke the remainder of a cigar that had been smoked by a Chinaman. When you buy a trust cigar you do the same thing. Chinamen make a large proportion of them and moisten the point with their tongues to shape them up. In a union shop no workman is allowed to touch a cigar with his mouth, pure vegetable glue being used to stick the ends. Be sanitary; see the blue label is on the box before purchasing a cigar.⁶³

In August, 1907, the Regina Trades and Labor Council joined the Vancouver-based Asiatic Exclusion League,⁶⁴ and in 1912 the provincial TLC executive waited on the government in Regina in an attempt to convince them to prohibit the employment of white females by Orientals in restaurants and laundries.⁶⁵ Probably seeing that no political harm could come of it, the cabinet introduced labour's request to the house, and the act was

duly passed and upheld in court that same year.⁶⁶ Minor amendments were made on a couple of occasions⁶⁷ without comment, showing that in Saskatchewan the Yellow Peril did not exist.

Much more than the East Asian, the real threat for Saskatchewan organized labour in the twenties became the Eastern European immigrant, as nativism took a firm hold on the second generation Anglo-Saxons who held positions of authority throughout the province. While the peasants homesteaded the abundant prairie and kept to themselves, they were welcome. But as the amount of cheap, good land dried up, as their sons and recently arrived relatives went to the cities for work, and as they used their vote to indiscriminately vote Liberal, opinion against them began to mount. The province's Conservative government of 1929-34, having been recently returned in part on the strength of nativist sentiment, established a royal commission in 1930 to examine the immigration question. Immediately the floodgate of vituperation was opened, as the commission held sittings in all of the province's major centres. Wherever organized labour was present, a delegation attended with a submission.

The traditional arguments against sponsored immigration, contract labour, and Orientals were dragged forth, but the emphasis had changed to the

Nationalities and classes of People who either by temperament, non assimilative qualifications, habits, customs, or absence of any permanent good which their coming brings to us are not a desirable acquisition to our Citizenship.⁶⁸

In labour's opinion, if immigrants were desirable they should be from the British Isles, rather than these people with their black bread and sausages who, being willing to work for low wages, dragged down living standards, and were at the root of the recession and unemployment that was beginning to be felt in the province.⁶⁹ But before

the recession had gone on many more months organized labour had more serious things to think about than "non assimilative" immigrants, although their sentiments continued to characterize the underlying ethnic cleavages prevalent in the province after the Great War.

The issue of immigration reveals most vividly the double direction of labour's attitudes--self-interest covered in arguments that justified it in terms of society's ultimate welfare. Similarly, the concept of unity was at once the symbol of the movement and the ultimate image which it tried to portray to outsiders, and also an objective which it constantly strove to attain. The group of enthusiastic artisans that made up the first craft unions in the province in 1906-7 were especially desirous of achieving immediate unity of purpose and direction. They were aided by the whole 19th century heritage and experience of American and British trade unionism which they could draw upon, and they adopted these almost like children copying the actions of adults to give the illusion of maturity. After the basic structure was established, the charter members of the movement in Saskatchewan, and especially those involved with the trades and labour councils, frantically tried to take on the trappings of unity, not only of the local unions, but also of the national, continental, and indeed international trade union movement.

The social benefits of union membership assisted them to some extent in achieving an element of unity, at least at the local level. Most unions still maintained the traditional role of a fraternal society, much like the Masons, offering fellowship to their members as well as health insurance and death benefits. Some, like the ITU, offered retirement homes for their members. Many of the older unions conducted

their meetings according to strict ritual, even with the use of passwords to gain entrance, a throwback to a time when unions were clandestine for self-preservation. Some of the railway brotherhoods offered special elaborate regalia for executive rank. The charter, usually intricately engraved, held a position of reverence on the wall of the meeting place and it was respectfully draped in black on the death of a member. But even the newer, less formal organizations offered the benefits of fellowship, with periodic smokers in addition to the monthly meeting. Still others tried to serve an educational function with the sponsorship of guest speakers, forums, and discussion groups,⁷⁰ as well as provision for some sort of library facilities containing books and periodicals of interest to the membership. At other times the trades council tried to supplement these resources through its educational committee.⁷¹

To demonstrate the good intentions of the movement in their area, there were immediate expressions of support for and financial contributions made to their brethren under attack from employers in other cities. To co-ordinate activities and inform local unionists of matters in the labour world it was decided by Regina unionists early in 1907 that the province should have its own labour press, and on May 31, 1907, the first number of Saskatchewan Labor's Realm appeared. Its raison d'être as explained by its editor, Hugh Peat, said a lot about the 450 Regina unionists who became the Realm's primary subscribers:

We would have our readers to understand from the outset that this paper is not being issued merely as a money making venture. It is to a large extent a labor of love. A labor from which no worker should shrink. For what greater ideal; what nobler ambition can be desired than the emancipation and aggrandisement of labor. Ever ready are we to touch the hat and bow the knee to pomp and plenty, to the leisured classes, and unworking aristocracy, so called, but how seldom do we find the meagrest

tribute to labor from which they evolve and without which they could not be.⁷²

The Realm proved to be of substantial benefit to the union label campaign instituted early by the province's movement, again partly in an attempt to demonstrate maturity. The reasoning for the campaign was simple and the ultimate results as visualized by labour were magnificent. All goods and services produced by unionists bore a sign or label, the union shop displayed a card and the union man wore a badge. Thus, other unionists and interested individuals could recognize it as union work, and could purchase it and boycott others. As the number of unionists increased through the use of the label, ultimately all workers would be unionized. Towards this end, all of the early trades councils worked very hard through special union label committees formed to educate their members as well as the public at large.

To further strengthen the image of solidarity which labour tried to project on the minds of the population, the first Monday in September had special significance. As early as 1882 it was considered as Labour Day. In 1907 all the unions then in existence and affiliated with trades councils chose Labour Day committees to make plans for the big event, the high point of which was to be a parade in Regina attended by unionists from both Regina and Moose Jaw. Some unions planned to enter floats, while others had their membership dress in uniform garb. To ensure attendance, some locals like the Regina plumbers decided to fine "all members not turning out on parade \$5" and to ensure stability "the same fine to be inflicted on any man turning out in any other than sober condition."⁷³ Various local dignitaries were invited to view the proceedings, which were topped off by a track and field meet, a

demonstration of bronco busting and an inter-city ball game.⁷⁴ Moose Jaw returned Regina's invitation in 1908 and in 1909 Saskatoon held its first public display of union strength.

Labour temples were also established to show solidarity. Another reason was to provide a physical centre of unity for the city's locals. In addition, the reluctance to rent space for meetings from local landowners was a consideration. In Regina the bricklayers made the first move by acquiring a hall in March, 1907, which they called Trades Hall and which they rented out to any union as well as to the council. But for a growing movement it was hardly adequate, and by 1911 plans were well under way by the Trades Council for a more suitable structure. City Council was approached to donate property,⁷⁵ but when the request was refused the council turned to the provincial government. As envisaged, the proposed Regina Labor Temple was to be monumental in size and in appearance:

The building would be used for a home of the various locals, & also for educational & recreative purposes. In the event of the grant being made we should be prepared to erect a handsome building & lay out the grounds in lawns, tennis courts, etc. In doing this we believe it would be to the advantage of all workers as then they would have somewhere to go to instead of as at present gathering around the bars of the town & so benefiting the people both phisically [sic] & morally.⁷⁶

In the meantime, Saskatoon's council proceeded with a more modest project and in 1911 a labour temple was erected at a cost of \$4,000,⁷⁷ and it nicely served the needs of the small movement in that city for almost twenty years when it was torn down to make way for the Broadway Bridge. For the next eight years meetings were held in the Stratford Building and in 1940 the Saskatoon Trades and Labor Council rented space in the Empire Hotel.⁷⁸

After the province's first temple was built, it took Regina unionists four years and numerous fund raising schemes⁷⁹ to get a home and the result came far short of initial expectations. The efforts of the Regina Labor Temple Joint Stock Company produced neither tennis courts nor even lawns but merely a two story grey clapboard building containing several meeting rooms and a number of offices. Major additions were made to the temple in 1928 at a cost of \$25,000 but by 1935 its value had decreased to the point where the company was in danger of going under, especially when expected use had fallen sharply with declining union membership.⁸⁰ In 1936 the Trades and Labor Council was forced to form the Labor Temple Protection Fund in an attempt to get the building out of its financial difficulties,⁸¹ but the renewed interest in union membership after 1937 eventually saved the building for Regina labour. However, many of those who had supported the temple from its beginnings saw it only as the home of the AFL-TLC movement and they were very reluctant to rent space to CIO-CCL unions in the forties, even though this would have improved the financial solvency of the Labor Temple Company. This, however, was a problem which the Moose Jaw movement never faced because it never had a central location it could identify itself with until a decade after the merger.

Like the great vision that Regina labour had for its labour temple, the desire to make Saskatchewan Labor's Realm the vehicle by which the movement in the entire province would be expanded and strengthened did not materialize. On July 31, 1908, it ceased publication, only to reappear on May 1, 1909 as a monthly under the name Labor's Realm, but even this modest effort only lasted a year. In 1913 it became merely an annual yearbook that was published in conjunction

with Labour Day celebrations, and it remained such through the entire period of this discussion.

The Realm was the only serious attempt to introduce an indigenous labour press to the Saskatchewan movement. On several occasions at a later date columns of news from the province's cities appeared in out-of-province papers like the Western Labor News of Winnipeg, but these were all short-lived because of an inability to retain correspondents.⁸² Most unionists contented themselves with their own trade journals as the typographers did with the Western Union Printer published in Medicine Hat, or they did without.

A similar attitude of indifference greeted the subject of large, enthusiastic Labour Day displays after the original lustre of the movement had worn off. After the first couple of years, an increasing number of unions took advantage of the public holiday to sponsor individual excursions out of town, and by 1915 even the Regina Trades and Labor Council held its celebration at Saskatchewan Beach, far away from public view.⁸³ In subsequent years interest in the event waxed and waned according to the composition of the council at the time,⁸⁴ but it never reached the same proportions as a demonstration of union solidarity as it did in the first few years of the movement's existence.

In some ways a more significant indication of the waning interest in the aspects of unionism beyond simple collective bargaining, because of its close connection with the economic aspirations of the movement, was the continuing lack of success which plagued the movement's leaders in their efforts to establish the union label. Even as early as 1907 Saskatchewan Labor's Realm complained about unionists who preferred a bargain rather than a union made product:

The printer who buys "scab" clothing because he can get it a little cheaper, must have cast iron nerve to complain of the man who goes to a non-union print shop for his work, because he can get it a little cheaper than the union shop can afford to do it. We have such men, however. We also have men holding offices and looking to increase their prominence with a plug of non-union chewing tobacco in their pocket.⁸⁵

Granted, there were victories as in 1929 when the Saskatoon council convinced City Council not to buy an American-LaFrance Corporation fire engine because the company was unfair to labour,⁸⁶ but by and large the general complaint was like the one made in 1934 that "...if all workers would ask for the union label when buying goods their [sic] would not be much need for such hearings as the Stevens commission."⁸⁷ But workers did not. In 1938 a report was received that Regina's mayor and prominent ITU member was having work done on his house by non-union carpenters.⁸⁸ Even with the return of good times the Label Committee of the Regina council reported in 1940 "...that many Members still patronize non-union barber shops, and further we are told that in some other services trade unionists are not even asking if the workmen or the shop they use are union concerns, such as painters, barbers and beauticians."⁸⁹

Those that realized the value of the label felt they had to keep harping on its importance to keep unionists aware. They tried to make the matter as simple as possible, even to the extent of publishing a Union Label Guide on an annual basis, as the Regina council did between 1927 and 1929.⁹⁰ When such efforts failed, the council even threatened to point the finger at those that it knew had violated the principles of a good unionist.⁹¹

In spite of appeals to basic principles, ultimately dejection and a feeling of futility were the only results. Only a devoted few

consistently cared for the essence of trade unionism with all its ramifications. There were extremes as with a member of the Moose Jaw lodge No. 204 of the Railway Carmen by the name of John Morfitt, who allegedly walked the fifty-five miles to his union's meeting every month and never missed one in ten years.⁹² But the maintenance of the trade union movement in Saskatchewan fell on the shoulders of more pragmatic and yet no less idealistic souls. Men like William Cocks, Ralph Heseltine and Harry Perry in Regina, James Somerville in Moose Jaw, and Alex Eddy and Cy Brunskill in Saskatoon acted as the mainstays for years on end, with no little sacrifice of their own interests and comfort. These were the men who consistently held executive responsibility, who organized the Labour Day celebrations and manned the booths, who contributed articles to the newspaper and issued press releases to the daily press, who sat on the board of directors of the labour temple, who operated the union label campaigns and who ran for public office as representatives of labour. In short, it was these few who created unity in a movement in which the natural direction was toward fragmentation.

The structure within which Saskatchewan labour operated should have been a vehicle of unity. Exclusive by skill, they belonged to international unions affiliated with the AFL and the TLC, each local being geographically represented on the parent bodies. In addition, some of the unions in a given area met periodically to discuss problems common to the trade. Each geographical unit had its own central organization as well, to co-ordinate activities--the TLC nationally, the Saskatchewan executive provincially, and the trades council locally. In theory, it was an ideal, tight-knit structure with delegate representation at all

levels to determine policy. And in fact it worked well on the odd occasion when the TLC, with national approval, instituted and co-ordinated a campaign on a subject of common concern like immigration policy. But in many instances regional differences in opinion on basic issues crept in, destroying the illusion of unity. The protective tariff and the support it received because of its importance in industrialized central Canada, in comparison with the indifference and even opposition the same subject elicited in Saskatchewan, is a case in point.⁹³ Another flaw in the structure centred on the fact that the TLC and its provincial executives were considered primarily tools for the exertion of pressure on federal and provincial governments. Such matters as organization were considered secondary, as demonstrated by the Congress's reaction to appeals for assistance from western affiliates to forestall the CIO-CCL threat during the Second World War.⁹⁴ The situation was further complicated by the fact that the central body, lacking sufficient financial resources as it did, was forced to concentrate its efforts where they would do the most good. The more highly industrialized areas of central Canada consistently got the nod, largely because these areas had the delegate strength to effect the measures they desired. As far as the movement in such provinces as Saskatchewan was concerned, the TLC either assumed concurrence,⁹⁵ or was indifferent,⁹⁶ or in the event of expressions of discontent maintained the central Canadian position by sheer delegate strength in convention, as the events of 1918 clearly showed.

The relationship between the Congress and its affiliates in Saskatchewan vividly illustrated the basic dilemma of the movement

in that province. It needed outside assistance to gain strength and unity, but the assistance was not forthcoming largely because the province's movement was so weak and divided and therefore was of little consequence when viewed from the perspective of the movement in the country as a whole. Yet to blame the Congress and the AFL would be to misplace the emphasis, because many of the reasons for the movement's division and weakness were indigenous. The lack of an industrially sophisticated economy meant small local unions, and although it is difficult to document, undoubtedly in the case of most of them the costs to the international in organizing and servicing far outweighed the money collected through per capita tax. As one international representative answered an appeal from Regina for assistance:

In reply to your letter...concerning lack of cooperation on the part of the International Alliance [of Theatrical and Stage Employees and Motion Picture Machine Operators] in straightening out situation in Regina, please be informed that I have been assured that Canada has always received more cooperation than any income derived or expected to be derived from Canada. Representatives and financial aid have been sent times without number.⁹⁷

For a similar reason the province's cities were always small and separated from each other, the closest two centres being forty miles apart. With relatively unsophisticated communications for most of the period in question, unionists in the various cities came together infrequently and only with the greatest difficulty. The only regular meeting was that of the provincial executive just before the annual interview with the government, and the main subject of concern on these occasions involved legislative proposals. The result of this very real lack of contact between centres was that each operated independently but at the same time suspected the motives and actions of unionists in other cities. Granted, as communications improved, the trades councils in

Moose Jaw and Regina came closer together, especially during the forties. Numerous joint meetings were held and delegates exchanged. Contracts and agreements in various trades were copied in the two cities to achieve an element of uniformity. The two councils also acted jointly in representations to the provincial government.

At the same time relations between labour in the southern cities and that in Saskatoon and Prince Albert steadily deteriorated. Correspondence of any kind was rare, and as a result information about the other's activities was based on rumour, much of which was wrong. Suspicion, recrimination and eventually name-calling were the results, as shown by the following comments made at a Regina council meeting:

Bro Reed, referring to the Labor members on the Regional War Labor Board, stated that they were not very aggressive, to say the least. Mr. Brumskill [of Saskatoon] was a weak sister and seemed to be a "Yes Man" and did not seem, by his attitude to have very much idea of trade wages. Bro. Davis [of Prince Albert] had a Railway Carman's complex, owing to his long membership in that Union. He knows their rates are low and doesn't seem to desire others to exceed them. Neither of the Labor representatives gave any assistance to the Labor delegation, when they visited the Board, which in his opinion, they should.⁹⁸

The situation almost reached a breaking point in 1945 over the method that labour should use to nominate its representatives to provincial government boards, Regina and Moose Jaw wanting each council to make nominations and the government to make "appointments according to merit and ability", while Saskatoon and Prince Albert wanted the provincial TLC executive to make the nominations. Thus, if the TLC movement could not agree on a policy there was little likelihood of co-operating with the competing CIO-CCL unions.⁹⁹

Ultimately the antipathies that existed between unionists in the various cities could have been relieved by a more effective provincial

executive. As the secretary of the Prince Albert council observed:

...Labor in Saskatchewan will lose ground unless the Provincial Executive can function more amicably. It would seem that this body has lost all conception of unity, which is the very essential of the Labor movement, and the prime essential to Labor's success.¹⁰⁰

Some farsighted souls had realized the ineffectiveness of the Saskatchewan TLC executive many years before. As early as 1919 a proposal was made that it be replaced by a provincial federation like those in Alberta and New Brunswick.¹⁰¹ The next year all the province's unions were canvassed for an opinion on the proposal. The replies received showed a definite desire for a federation but a lack of finances due to insufficient unionists made the proposal unworkable at that time.¹⁰²

The issue refused to remain dead and was resurrected in 1923 by the radical Saskatoon council,¹⁰³ which contended that the TLC provincial executive was not truly representative of labour opinion in the province and therefore called for a conference to form a federation. The Moose Jaw and Regina councils concurred, but the conference does not appear to have materialized.¹⁰⁴ However, the matter was again raised in 1929, this time as a resolution from the Regina Lodge No. 253 of the Railway Carmen to the TLC Convention, asking for a federation because of the lack of unity over the revised Workmen's Compensation Act of that year.¹⁰⁵ The resolution was lost on a vote.¹⁰⁶

The depression made it extremely difficult for the province's unions to maintain existing membership, let alone forming larger combinations. Thus, it was almost a decade before the subject of a provincial labour federation was again raised. With the appearance of new life early in 1938, the Saskatoon council again suggested a

conference to discuss federation, but after much confusion the Regina council took the initiative and invited delegates to meet in the capital. In the interim the council canvassed both the Congress and member unions on the idea. In both instances the results were less than encouraging. The Congress response, in fact, showed a definite desire to discourage greater unity at the provincial level. The reasons given by Congress President Draper were:

Before taking action to call a conference for the purpose of forming a Federation I presume that very careful thought will be given as to whether the need exists for the same and whether the local unions and Trades and Labor Councils of your Province can afford to carry the cost which would be involved.¹⁰⁷

To some extent his observations were correct, as shown by the reply of a representative of one of the unions canvassed:

...I am of the opinion, based on many years experience that our Lodges in this Province generally are not in favor of a Provincial Federation of Labour.

Further those Lodges of other Organizations affiliated with the Trades and Labor Congress, here have not to date over the years been keen on Legislative matters, preferring to leave it to the enthusiastic few in this Province, and they are the Saskatchewan Executive of the Congress, and I should not like the job of trying to collect dues for the Federation of Labour from these various Lodges that I speak of, and because of these facts, I cannot at this date agree that our members and the majority of others affected are in any way interested in this subject, and while I wish it was otherwise, yet to be truthful about it, they are not.¹⁰⁸

The conference did eventually meet on June 5 with only one out-of-town delegate, Alex Eddy of Saskatoon, and the only decision reached on federation was to postpone further discussion until after the TLC Convention that fall.¹⁰⁹

To some extent intercity labour contact was assisted by the return of prosperity, and delegates from the various councils especially from Moose Jaw and Regina, met periodically to discuss matters of mutual

concern, thus supplementing the provincial executive.¹¹⁰ However, the province's first labour federation came about as a result of the efforts of the CIO-CCL unions in November, 1944,¹¹¹ leaving the TLC movement still discussing possible federation¹¹² and coming no closer than a suggestion made by the Regina council that the provincial executive meet in each city once a year at a cost of \$40.00 to each trades council.¹¹³

The inability of Saskatchewan's TLC unions to realize their long sought after dream of a provincial federation, with the independence that such a body would have provided, was in many ways symbolic of the weakness and vulnerability of the movement in that province. The establishment of a federation would have meant that labour would have been able to oppose the TLC and the internationals more effectively, or at least put up a more united front against policies that were detrimental to Saskatchewan labour. Furthermore, unionists would have had the organizational structure, and probably the finances to pursue beneficial matters such as organization to their logical conclusion. The TLC advised against a federation on numerous occasions. Being weak financially and divided geographically, Saskatchewan labour thus had to depend on the central body to provide it with the framework of provincial organization--the provincial executive. Herein lay the problem. A federation would have strengthened their position as a united force, but the movement lacked the basic unity and interest to achieve it.

But while a federation would have brought union leaders in the various cities closer together with positive results, it would not have solved the even more basic problem of the fragmentation of the movement

in each city exemplified by the fact that in 1939, of the possible forty-three unions in Regina only twenty-three were affiliated with the council.¹¹⁴ There were traditional ethnic differences--the problems of establishing a labourers' union in 1907 and 1908 is an excellent example--and they became increasingly apparent as more non-Anglo-Saxons entered the movement.¹¹⁵ There were also instances of a condescending attitude taken by the more highly skilled and more secure trades like the Typos toward the rest of the movement.¹¹⁶ The unwillingness of many of the railway brotherhoods to seek affiliation with the trades and labour councils, is another example of the same sentiment.¹¹⁷

Even within the same union, and within the same trades council there were serious differences. Most of these were ideological, based in part at least on a generation gap which existed between particular unions and unionists, and involved such pivotal questions as direct political action by labour,¹¹⁸ organization of the unskilled,¹¹⁹ industrial versus craft unionism,¹²⁰ national versus international unions, and state control over labour relations.¹²¹ When these differences became sufficiently serious they led ultimately to schism and new organizations dual to the TLC. The One Big Union, The Workers' Unity League, and the Canadian Federation of Labour, are examples of such organizations which sprang up to represent various shades of opinion among organized workers. Their presence, although either short-lived or lacking a significant number of adherents, still caused at worst antipathies and at best confusion among individuals to whom the enhancement of the position of the workers was reputed to be the primary objective. Yet, to condemn the movement for disunity and a lack of

conviction out of hand is to forget one simple fact. Saskatchewan unionists, leaders or rank-and-file, enthusiastic or indifferent, co-operative and committed or apathetic, had but one thing in common: their union membership was in most cases voluntary. Hence, the degree of participation in and concern for union affairs was determined by individual needs, aspirations and interests. One suspects that the movement as originally constituted before the Great War involved persons committed to the principles of unionism by their British working class background, and they acted accordingly. However, local conditions as well as the principles of bread and butter unionism inherent in the AFL-TLC structure combined to dissipate enthusiasm and class-consciousness in succeeding generations of Saskatchewan unionists, to produce a relatively conservative unionist interested in day-to-day advances in his economic position rather than in societal reform.

FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER IX

¹Moose Jaw Times, June 1, 8, 12, July 5, Aug. 7, 28, Sept. 18, 28, 1906.

²See Chapter VII for a discussion of labour's political involvement at the civic level.

³Western Labor News, Sept. 20, 1920.

⁴RT&LC Minutes, Oct. 13, Nov. 10, 1919, meetings; Western Labor News, April 9, 1920.

⁵Western Labor News, May 6, 1921.

⁶See Chapter IV for more details.

⁷See Richard Allen, "The Social Gospel and the Reform Tradition in Canada, 1890-1928," CHR, Vol. XLIX, No. 4, (Dec. 1968), pp. 381-399.

⁸Saskatchewan Labor's Realm, Dec. 20, 1907.

⁹Ibid., Dec. 6, 1907.

¹⁰Western Labor News, July 18, 1919.

¹¹Board of Evangelism and Social Service Annual Report, 1945.

¹²James Duncan, "Unionism and Public Ownership," Saskatchewan Labor's Realm, Sept. 20, 1907.

¹³RT&LC Minutes, Feb. 18, March 18, April 15, 1910, meetings.

¹⁴Ibid., June 28, 1943 meeting; RLO, 1935, p. 22, 1938, p. 22.

¹⁵RT&LC files, Report of RT&LC Committee on Free Hospital, Jan. 28, 1918. See also TLC Platform of Principles, 1931 and 1935 both of which called for "...state insurance for sickness and disability." RLO, 1935, p. 22, 1938, p. 22.

¹⁶RT&LC files, ST&LC Brief to Commission on Rehabilitation and Reconstruction, n.d.

¹⁷Ibid., RT&LC Hospital Committee Report, Dec. 23, 1940.

¹⁸The Voice, March 3, 1916.

¹⁹Ibid., June 5, 1908.

²⁰Saskatchewan Labor's Realm, Jan. 17, 1908.

²¹Moose Jaw Times, Dec. 7, 1907.

²²RT&LC Minutes, Nov. 9, 1907, meeting.

²³Regina Daily Standard, Dec. 17, 1907; Moose Jaw Times, Dec. 17, 1907.

²⁴Saskatchewan Labor's Realm, Dec. 20, 1907.

²⁵The Voice, July 2, 1915; RT&LC Minutes, Feb. 9, 1914; SA, International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, Iron Ship Builders and Helpers No. 478 (Moose Jaw) Minutes, April 13, 1914, meeting.

²⁶The Morning Leader, Jan. 1, 1917.

²⁷RT&LC minutes, Nov. 23, 1907, meeting.

²⁸Saskatoon Typographical Union No. 663 minutes, Oct. 4, 1913, meeting.

²⁹RT&LC files, RT&LC Executive Committee Report, Feb. 6, 1943.

³⁰RT&LC files, James J. Ralph (TLC Ontario Executive) to RT&LC, Oct. 26, 1918.

³¹Borden Papers, 54044, "Minutes of Conference on Labour's Position on War Problems."

³²Western Labor News, March 14, 1919

³³RT&LC files, Executive Committee Report, March 10, 1924.

³⁴Ibid., report of RT&LC delegation to the provincial government, Sept. 22, 1924.

³⁵W.E. Cocks, "The Trade Union Movement's Attitude to the Temperance Question," Labor's Realm, 1934, pp. 24-6.

³⁶RT&LC minutes, Feb. 22, 1943, meeting.

³⁷Saskatchewan Labor's Realm, Nov. 22, 1907.

³⁸TLC Proceedings, 1892, p. 23.

³⁹Ibid., 1899, pp. 26-7.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 27; RLO, 1935, p. 22, 1938, p. 22.

⁴¹Labor's Realm, April 1, 1910.

⁴²J.E. Chambers, "The Use of the Plebiscite and Referendum in Saskatchewan," unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 1965, pp. 54-9.

⁴³RT&LC files, J.A. Somerville to all T&LC's, May 21, 1920.

⁴⁴RLO, 1923, pp. 210-11.

⁴⁵People's Weekly, May 9, 1936.

⁴⁶C.L. Cleverdon, The Woman Suffrage Movement of Canada, Toronto: 1950), p. 80; Christine MacDonald, "How Saskatchewan Women Got the Vote," Saskatchewan History, Vol. I, No. 3, (Oct., 1948), p. 6.

⁴⁷Borden Papers, 54070, Minutes of Conference on Labour's Position on War Problems, Jan. 16-18, 1918.

⁴⁸Western Labor News, May 9, 1919.

⁴⁹RT&LC Minutes, April 28, 1919 meeting; The Morning Leader, April 29, 1919; RT&LC files, RT&LC secretary to Florence Perry, Sept. 9, 1924.

⁵⁰For reports on Conference conventions see Alberta Labor News, March 9 and 30, 1929, April 4 and May 16, 1931.

⁵¹Immigration Branch files RG 76, Acc. No. 70/65, file 852348, clippings from The Saturday Press (Saskatoon), Nov. 30, 1912, P. Sweeney to Commissioner of Immigration (Winnipeg), June 11, 1913, J.B. Walker to Mayor of P.A., June 14, 1913, C. Chisholm to G.G. Archibald, May 21, 1913, etc.

⁵²Ibid., Acc. No. 69/17, box 150, file 195281 #3, Edward Sillitoe (secretary-treasurer Interprovincial Council of Man., Sask., and Alberta of the Bricklayers, "Masons' and Plasterers' International Union) to P.M. Draper, June 2, 1913, Draper to W.D. Scott (Superintendent of Immigration), June 25, 1913, Sillitoe to Scott, June 30, 1913, Scott to Sillitoe, July 9, 1913.

⁵³Ibid., W.D. Scott to Mr. Cory, July 10, 1913.

⁵⁴Saskatchewan Labor's Realm, June 28, 1907.

⁵⁵See SA, W.R. Motherwell Papers, file "Immigration: Aug. 17, 1906-Nov. 25, 1917.

⁵⁶Dunning Papers, 14259, David C. Lamb to Dunning, Nov. 11, 1920.

⁵⁷Saskatchewan Labor's Realm, Nov. 8, 1907; see also Sept. 13, 1907 and "Western Views on Immigration," Canadian Congress Journal, Aug., 1929, pp. 11-13. Sask. Dept. of Labour file I 6(2), W.J. Routledge to McDonald, April 24, 1929 describes the subterfuge used by immigrants who were under contract to work on farms, thus allowing them to leave "to work at other lines."

⁵⁸J.S. Woodsworth, "The Coming Winter," Canadian Forum, Sept., 1921, pp. 363-4.

⁵⁹Western Labor News, June 24, 1921; The Labour Gazette, Nov., 1928, p. 1181.

⁶⁰The Progressive, Sept. 20, 1923.

⁶¹TLC Exec. Board Minutes, Jan. 30-31, 1925, meeting. The Congress position is spelled out in great detail in PAC, Bennett Papers, 8168-71, 'Memorandum Re Immigration and Emigration,' in Memo of Proposed Legislation submitted to the Dominion Government by the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada, Dec. 16, 1926.

⁶²See R. Daniels, The Politics of Prejudice, (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1962.) for a detailed discussion of the Oriental exclusion campaign in the U.S.

⁶³Saskatchewan Labor's Realm, May 31, 1907; see also Sept. 27, 1907.

⁶⁴RT&LC Minutes, Aug. 10, 1907, meeting.

⁶⁵Bureau of Labour Report, 1912, pp. 34-5.

⁶⁶Ibid., pp. 36-7, 41-2.

⁶⁷The Labour Gazette, March, 1919, p. 375, Feb. 1926, p. 119.

⁶⁸Royal Commission on Immigration and Settlement (Sask.), 1930, Proceedings, Vol. 35, Submission of PAT&LC, pp. 59-63.

⁶⁹Ibid., Vol. 2, pp. 130-43, Vol. 3, pp. 40-69, Vol. 20, pp. 58-81, Vol. 31, pp. 7-23.

⁷⁰Saskatchewan Labor's Realm, Nov. 1, 1907.

⁷¹Labor's Realm, Aug. 2, 1908; RT&LC files, Report of Educational Committee, June 9, 1924.

⁷²May 31, 1907.

⁷³RT&LC Minutes, Aug. 31, 1907, meeting.

⁷⁴The Morning Leader, Sept. 3, 1907.

⁷⁵RT&LC Minutes, July 21, 1911, meeting.

⁷⁶Sask. Government Public Works file #61, George Peake to Deputy Minister of Public Works, May 4, 1912.

⁷⁷RLO, 1913, pp. 188-9.

⁷⁸Canadian Congress Journal, Nov., 1940, p. 20.

⁷⁹RT&LC Minutes, Feb. 14, 1913, meeting.

⁸⁰RT&LC files, RT&LC to R.B. Bennett, Feb. 7, 1935; H. Perry, "Regina's Labor Temple," Canadian Congress Journal, Feb., 1930, p. 19.

⁸¹RT&LC Minutes, Aug. 24, 1936, meeting.

⁸²Western Labor News, May 6, 1921.

⁸³RT&LC Minutes, July 26, 1915, meeting.

⁸⁴Western Labor News, Aug. 30, 1918; RT&LC files, Report of Labour Day Committee to RT&LC, Oct. 27, 1919; Sask. Dept. of Labour file I 10(1), H.S. Johnstone to J. Chambers, Aug. 28, 1939.

⁸⁵July 19, 1907.

⁸⁶Alberta Labor News, April 20, 1929.

⁸⁷RT&LC Minutes, March 12, 1934.

⁸⁸RT&LC files, Chambers to ITU No. 657, July 4, 1938.

⁸⁹Ibid., Label Committee Report, June 24, 1940.

⁹⁰ Copies of the Guide are in RT&LC files.

⁹¹ Ibid., Label Committee Report, June 24, 1940.

⁹² Alberta Labor News, Feb. 21, 1931.

⁹³ Tom Moore, "Labor's Interest in the Tariff," Canadian Congress Journal, Jan., 1925, pp. 11-12.

⁹⁴ See Chapter VI for a detailed discussion of this problem.

⁹⁵ Borden Papers, 540377, "Minutes of Conference on Labour's Position on War Problems," Jan. 16, 1918.

⁹⁶ RT&LC Minutes, Sept. 21, 1919, meeting.

⁹⁷ RT&LC files, R.M. Kennedy (7th V-P) to Heseltine, Sept. 12, 1936.

⁹⁸ RT&LC Minutes, Nov. 1942, meeting. See also RT&LC files, W.J. Patterson to Cocks, Aug. 26, 1942, for Cocks' negative assessment of long-time Saskatoon unionist, Gerald E. Dealtry.

⁹⁹ T.C. Douglas Papers, 294a (7-1-1), W.J. Smith to T.C. Douglas, July 9, 1945 and July 18, 1945; RT&LC files, W.J. Smith to Yovanov, April 5, 1945, Yovanov to Smith, April 9, 1945, Yovanov to Douglas, Sept. 22, 1945, Yovanov to A. Tait, W.J. Smith and J.T. Goodwin, Aug. 7, 1945, Smith to Yovanov, Aug. 10, 1945; RT&LC Minutes, July 23, 1945, meeting.

¹⁰⁰ RT&LC files, J.T. Goodwin to all T&LC's, Oct. 12, 1945.

¹⁰¹ The Labour Gazette, Oct., 1920, p. 1337.

¹⁰² TLC Proceedings, 1920, pp. 121-2; RT&LC files, Memo Somerville to all locals, May 12, 1920.

¹⁰³ See Chapter III for more details.

104 RT&LC Minutes, June 25, 1923 meeting; The Worker, July 18, 1923.

105 See Chapter VIII.

106 TLC Proceedings, 1929, p. 188.

107 RT&LC files, Draper to Chambers, March 16, 1938.

108 Ibid., H.D. Davis to Chambers, April 2, 1938.

109 Ibid., Minutes of Trade Union Antifascist Conference, June 5, 1938.

110 See RT&LC Minutes, June 10, 1940, meeting.

111 Canadian Unionist, Nov., 1944, p. 129; SFL Pamphlet "10 Years Growth 1944-1953."

112 RT&LC files, Sask. TLC Executive Minutes, March 1-2, 1945, meeting.

113 RT&LC Minutes, Feb. 26, 1945, meeting.

114 RT&LC files, John Chambers to secretary of Central Council of Railroad Unions, May 10, 1939. Information on this Council was unavailable to the writer.

115 Western Labor News, Aug. 30, 1918.

116 See editorials re ITU in Ibid., May 27, 1920, p. 6, July 1, 1921, p. 6.

117 RT&LC files, Chambers to secretary of Central Council of Railroad Unions, May 10, 1939.

118 See Chapter VII for a discussion of politics as a divisive force on Saskatchewan labour.

119 RT&LC files, R. Heseltine to P.M. Draper, Jan. 13, 1933.

¹²⁰RT&LC Minutes, May 26 and July 13, 1936 meetings. See especially Chapters II and IV for a discussion of industrial unionism as it applied to Saskatchewan's TLC movement.

¹²¹See Dunning Papers, file M6X-11-0 for correspondence between Charles Dunning and Saskatoon Trades and Labor Council president J. McRorie Hill over the differences of opinion which existed in regard to the proposed application of compulsory arbitration.

CONCLUSION

ORGANIZED LABOUR IN AN AGRICULTURAL ENVIRONMENT

One fact which has become obvious in this examination of organized labour in Saskatchewan, and which has been stressed repeatedly, is the impact that the physical separation of the various trade union centres in the province had on the movement as a whole. Combined with poor communications, it resulted in disunity and has contributed to suspicion and hard feeling based on misinformation. This was but one indication of the weakness of the movement. The nature of the provincial economy has also been stressed as an important determining factor in moulding the character of the movement. The cities or urban centres largely served the function of servicing the immediately outlying agricultural area. For example, in 1935 in Saskatoon there were a total of seventy-two small manufacturing industries employing a total of 1,489 people, but except for the Robin Hood Flour Mill the market was strictly local.¹ In this regard, Alma Lawton makes an observation in her study of relief administration in Saskatchewan which can be universally applied:

In many ways it is artificial to isolate the rural and urban aspects of relief. An urban centre in Saskatchewan...was essentially a service centre for its surrounding rural area--a place for shopping, medical and legal aid, banking and insurance, and transportation and distributing facilities. The economy of the city, town or village was directly related to and dependent on that of the farmer.²

Thus, as far as industries employing unionists were concerned, the

construction and printing trades predominated. This was definitely the case in Regina and was in large part true in Moose Jaw as well, although there the Robin Hood Flour Mills and the CPR were also employers of a significant number of unionists,³ but even these two industries were directly dependent on local agriculture.

Moreover, in consequence of the cities being mere service centres, the trade union movement was continuously dependent on agricultural prosperity. There were seasonal fluctuations, as in the Moose Jaw packing plant of Gordon, Ironsides and Fares, where very little stock was delivered during the spring and fall when farmers were otherwise occupied with seeding and harvesting.⁴ As far as the construction industry was concerned, it was readily admitted by those intimately connected with it that

About this time every year [May] there is always some unrest in the building trade, because building statistics of all western states show there is not the amount of building undertaken until the crop is insured. Crop conditions are the deciding factor in building conditions in this Western country, in all our Western cities you will find no large amount of building is undertaken until after the 15th of July or the 1st of August.⁵

To supplement private construction a very early reliance developed by both the industry and its employees on government public works projects, both federal and provincial. In the case of occupations and trades outside of construction and printing, the civic governments absorbed a large number, as for example, the City of Saskatoon which employed street railway employees, electrical workers, firemen, and teachers as well as other civic employees.⁶ But the amount of industrial activity, government-sponsored or otherwise, fluctuated with the economic conditions prevalent in the province. The "boom" years which

began the second decade of the century saw major expansion, especially in the construction industry, but with the squeeze between 1913 and 1915 there were immediate problems. Everyone involved in construction turned to the government but it too had less to spend and, while perhaps willing, was not able to accommodate the applicants. The cycle repeated itself over and over again--in 1919-23 and in 1930-37--with similar results each time.⁷ Even war did not bring the necessary relief, because the isolated position of the province in the centre of the country meant that war work was not immediately forthcoming.⁸

As late as 1944, the eight largest urban centres in Saskatchewan (Regina, Saskatoon, Moose Jaw, Prince Albert, North Battleford, Weyburn, Yorkton and Swift Current) had only 20.3 percent of the population (167,130 of 823,320),⁹ of whom only about ten percent (16,557) belonged to unions.¹⁰ Thus one can safely conclude that the cities were embryonic and the unions were small for most of the period under consideration, especially when one considers that union membership almost doubled between 1942 and 1944. Furthermore, besides being numerically insignificant they were unable to maintain a united front, and they were constantly at a distinct disadvantage as an economic interest group. The government took every opportunity to stress labour's vulnerability so as to make unionists more moderate in their legislative demands. As a further indication of labour's relative lack of importance, whatever labour legislation was passed was largely of a "copy-cat" variety, having been passed and tested where labour was more of a power to contend with. Even here, furthermore, exceptions in application were made for those employed in agriculture. The Workmen's Compensation Act is the most obvious example. Even under the CCF after 1944 exception was made for

farm employees in the Annual Holidays Act. Still other pieces of legislation important to labour were deemed not applicable to Saskatchewan. As the Bureau of Labour Commissioner, Thomas Molloy, told the Federal Department of Labour: "The Province of Saskatchewan being almost wholly an agricultural province has no industrial plants developed to an extent that the Hours of Work Act would be of any importance to wage earners in the Province."¹¹

The constant weakness and inherent vulnerability of Saskatchewan labour forced it to rely continually on organizations elsewhere, such as the Trades and Labor Congress and the international unions, for servicing and organizing. Yet as a result of the relative insignificance of the Saskatchewan movement it was largely ignored because the ultimate returns in terms of membership gains for the movement were in many cases too small to justify the cost. Even on the odd occasion when representatives of the central bodies did manage to visit Saskatchewan's unionists, their attitude toward their brethren in the hinterland was inevitably condescending.¹² However, if local labour hoped to seek redress for what their membership considered an obvious injustice, they had to travel to the annual convention, usually held in a centre so far away that the cost of sending even a token contingent was prohibitive. Yet the creation of independent organizations such as the One Big Union was doomed to failure because there was even less of a financial-numerical base than existed under the Congress and the internationals. The lack of industrialization made it impossible to create a significant movement even if the existing structure was at all interested in the unskilled and semi-skilled.

The absence of an industrial base did have an inverse benefit,

however, in that Saskatchewan did not have the concomitant problems that usually accompanied the concentration of manpower resources in particular areas devoted to the extraction of resources or the mass production of goods. In the mining areas of Alberta and British Columbia, working conditions attracted organizations which favoured radical and at times violent solutions to problems. In Saskatchewan, on the other hand, though the police were always on the watch for the appearance of organizations like the Industrial Workers of the World, they never found any, even in the most difficult times.¹³ Similarly, in the cities the revolutionaries were a joke. During the thirties, of the two Communist affiliates working in the province, the Farmers' Unity League appeared to have more influence than the Workers' Unity League.¹⁴

The only obvious example of an appreciable extractive industry in the province was the lignite mining operation in the Estevan-Bienfait area. There even traditional unions like the United Mine Workers of America could not gain a foothold for a large part of the period, let alone an organization like the IWW. The OBU made an attempt to organize the men in the area in 1920 but it was suppressed before anything was accomplished. The CPC affiliated Mine Workers' Union of Canada did create a stir in 1931, but it was momentary. More important, however, despite the fact that the provincial government had great plans for the development of the coal resources in the area, the deposits were of such poor quality and the region was so isolated that it was virtually a state unto itself, ignored not only by the farming population but also by the existing unions.¹⁵

An examination of the number of strikes and lockouts in Saskatchewan also has some bearing in demonstrating the lack of strength of the province's labour movement on the one hand and its relative conservatism on the other:

Year	No. of disputes	No. of employees	Year	No. of disputes	No. of employees
1912	14	1,930	1929	1	56
1913	5	243	1930	2	890
1914	2	78	1931	5	744
1915	2	88	1932	8	365
1916	6	441	1933	-	-
1917	5	200	1934	-	-
1918	9	1,015	1935	-	-
1919	6	1,319	1936	1	4
1920	2	100	1937	3	24
1921	7	221	1938	3	481
1922	3	73	1939	1	400
1923	2	24	1940	-	-
1924	1	26	1941	-	-
1925	-	-	1942	2	109
1926	-	-	1943	2	106
1927	3	79	1944	1	48
1928	2	115	1945	3	1,471

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As can be seen, Saskatchewan was hardly a province that was racked by industrial strife. Unionists were much more prone to run than fight, and except for four occasions, the number of disputes and the number of employees affected was consistently small. In the period encompassing the end of the First World War and the immediate post-war period, when Saskatchewan unionists tried to fall into line with their brethren in Winnipeg and elsewhere, their reaction did not produce a confrontation with the population at large. In fact, because the farming community was upset for many of the same reasons, there were even expressions of sympathy and support from influential segments of farming

opinion, as seen from the following editorial in Turner's Weekly, a predecessor of The Western Producer published in Saskatoon:

It has been generally admitted that there can be no peace in the industrial world without co-operation and mutual concessions by employers and employees; but, in spite of the universal adoption of the union principle, this handful of factory-owners in Winnipeg has plunged the city into a state of absolute commercial and industrial chaos by their steadfast clinging to the one idea that their allegiance to their own personal bank accounts far outstrips any claims upon them by the men whose lives depend on their activities, and by the public of which they, under the present system, form a necessary part....There is in Canada no law which can be evoked to compel the metal magnates to treat with the union of their employees, but there is no doubt that, if future occurrences [sic] of the kind are to be avoided in other Canadian cities, the most drastic legislation will have to be placed on the statute books. The time has come when the man or men who stand out against the progress of the worker towards a more legitimate share in the production of the country, must be considered a more dangerous man to the safety of the state than the most rabid Bolshevik or the ruddiest of Reds. Those who hold that the old pre-war order can go quietly on its way, capital taking what it likes and labor what it can get, must be made to realize that the war has pulled down industrial junkerism just as surely as it has demolished the military junkers of Germany.¹⁷

For the most part being so conservative in deed if not in thought, organized labour was never very far out of touch with the thinking of the rest of Saskatchewan society. Consequently, there were numerous instances of expressions of sympathy for each other's condition by both farmer and labourer. At times, in fact, the relationship became one of mutual co-operation for the achievement of common goals. They believed in many of the same things, which made the task easier. They joined or supported each other's co-operative enterprises to beat the rising cost of living. They backed each other's causes, as in the case of the Regina and Saskatoon trades councils protesting to the government over the sale of oleomargarine, after being requested to do so by the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association.¹⁸ In a reciprocal manner,

in 1927 during a long dispute between the International Brotherhood of Blacksmiths, Drop Forgers and Helpers and the Richardson Road Machinery Company in Saskatoon over union recognition, the local branch of the United Farmers of Canada, Saskatchewan Section, tried to assist the men in every way possible. Especially helpful was the publicity given through The Western Producer to the fact that wages were not the root cause for the high cost of farm machinery, and that the company was generally unfair to its employees.¹⁹ At a later date the UFC instituted a boycott of the products of the Lake of the Woods Milling Company "until the employees received a fair deal from the Company."²⁰

There were instances of mutual assistance given during times of trouble as in December, 1923, when the Saskatoon local of the Farmers' Union of Canada offered a boxcar loaded with farm produce and poultry to the Saskatoon Trades and Labor Council, to be distributed to "destitute" labourers so that they might have a merrier Christmas.²¹ They also made use of each other's news publications to better circulate their views. For a number of months early in the twenties a column entitled "Saskatchewan Non-Partisan League" appeared in the Western Labor News, the primary labour publication for the prairies. Similarly, labour's most influential representative in the House of Commons, J.S. Woodsworth, contributed a column called "This Week in Ottawa" to The Progressive, and it became a weekly feature beginning in 1924. In addition, this paper, and its successor, The Western Producer, usually gave full coverage to Congress conventions. As well, editorials explaining labour's views on a wide variety of matters constantly appeared in these influential farm journals, and many of these were in turn reproduced in The Western Labor News and its successor, The Weekly News.²²

Occasionally organized farmers and organized labour also exchanged delegates to each other's meetings. For example, in March, 1920, George Broadly of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association became a "delegate at large" to the Regina Trades and Labor Council where he was given "voice and vote," and to which he contributed a great deal over the following months.²³ Ten years later, when the UFC had succeeded the SGGA as the dominant farm organization in the province, a resolution was passed by the farmers to the effect "that the executive of this organization work in closer co-ordination with the executive of the Trades and Labour [sic] Council and other similar organizations in this Dominion."²⁴ Shortly thereafter two delegates from the farm organization took seats on the Trades Council, because "...we feel that our problems, to a very large extent, are their problems."²⁵

This overriding feeling of affinity of objectives meant that both parties were able to utilize each other's resources with clear conscience. For example, when long-time Saskatoon unionist, Alex Eddy, became an alderman the UFC constantly used him to gain the ear of City Council.²⁶ Even more often, however, the leader of the Labor group in the House of Commons was approached to put forth the farmers' views. As UFC secretary, Frank Eliason, told Woodsworth in 1930:

We thought perhaps our independent members would be able to bring our views before the House of Commons. We cannot see why they should not go all the way and expound our theories on the floor of the House without fear. We do not know enough about parliamentary procedure to be able to decide as to whether or not it is possible to introduce the measure which we advocate. We can therefore only leave the matter in your hands and knowing as we do that our independent members will do all in their power to secure the necessary reforms.²⁷

While the instances of farmer-labour co-operation in Saskatchewan

were intermittent during the first three decades, they became more apparent with the advent of the depression. Representatives of the UFC and the trades councils met more frequently to discover common grounds to combat economic dislocation.²⁸ Because UFC offices were located in Saskatoon the trades and labour council there worked very closely with the farmers' organization.²⁹ When the United Farmers asked for assistance from labour in their campaign for a 100 percent pool they got support from far and wide. The Regina council expressed complete support and asked the farmers to dispatch a speaker to explain the scheme in greater detail.³⁰ Even Division 896 of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers (Regina) expressed support and offered any kind of assistance its membership could give.³¹

The next month when 300 representatives of the farmers' organization marched on the provincial government in an attempt to persuade it to in turn convince the federal government of the need for an effective Grain Marketing Act to handle the 1931 crop, representatives of organized labour were in attendance. Significantly, along with the grain marketing issue, resolutions were presented opposing harassment of debtors, foreclosures on farms and homes, and advocating debt adjustment for both city and country dwellers. Labour had previously given notice that it would not support the UFC stand on raising the income tax, advocating a luxury tax instead, but on the whole their positions were essentially the same.³² This mutual good will continued for the duration of the depression and the years thereafter, as indicated by the apparent ability of farmer and labourer to co-exist within the CCF party and work toward common ends.

Besides the seeming conservatism of the Saskatchewan labour

movement which did not place it too far out of touch with the mainstream of economic and social thought in the province, there are a number of other possible explanations for the good relations that existed between organized labour and organized farmers. Much of the direction toward this end was provided by the oracles of prairie reform. Men like Partridge of Sintaluta, the Paynter brothers from Tantallon, and later Frank Eliason of Saskatoon, who were intimately involved with the farmers' movement in its various forms, joined men like Edward Stevenson from the Moose Jaw railway yards, and Bill Cocks and Ralph Heseltine (in their early idealistic years), in the basic belief that farmer and labourer were one in ideology. They did not consider themselves the employers of labour arrayed against the employees, but rather mutual producers of commodities basic to the needs of the nation but for which they were not getting their due reward, because of power vested in those who did not toil. In addition, there were others who argued from a more pragmatic vantage point on the need for co-operation:

But apart from the fundamental identity of aims of the farmer and the city worker, agrarians have another and more obviously selfish interest in the lessening of unemployment and in the general welfare of those engaged in industry. Dwellers in the cities both in Europe and Canada, are consumers of farmers' products. The working man is usually the bread-winner--significant word--for a large family and if he earns good wages will consume as much or more bread and other farm products as the millionaire. One man has only one appetite and the workers' is usually a good one.³³

Pragmatism aside, not only the "true-blue" co-operators but also the majority of the leaders of both the farmers' and labour movements were cut essentially from the same cloth. Most of them were from the British Isles and many, even among the farmers, had cut their economic teeth on British trade unionism and socialism. As J.S. Woodsworth commented on one of his many speaking tours:

Out here one meets many Old Countrymen trained in the I.L.P. and Co-operative movements "at home." Undoubtedly they have exerted a strong influence in the Co-operative Farm Movement. Only yesterday a farmer's wife was telling men of her first strike as a factory lass....³⁴

So it was not unusual for the head office of the UFC to send a wire of encouragement to the British Trade Union Congress during the general strike of 1926,³⁵ nor for the British Labour Party to be held up as a constant source of inspiration to both progressive farmers and reform-minded unionists,³⁶ with its activities consistently covered by the periodicals of both, along with the soccer scores. By virtue of common birth, both farmer and labour leaders constantly appealed to British principles of fair play. For example, the Regina Trades and Labor Council described the federal government's relief camps as "forced labor, and surely not british [sic] in principle."³⁷

Because of this rather widespread similarity in background the leadership of farmer and labour groups held many of the same beliefs and had many of the same objectives for society. Public ownership, co-operative enterprise, and electoral reform were high on the list of priorities for both. Even their respective views on immigration were not dissimilar. While unionists were consistently leery of sponsored immigration of any sort because of the bad experiences they had had with immigrants from Europe's cities who eventually augmented the urban work force, they were not much worried by the immigrant farmer who homesteaded to practise his occupation. But with the depletion in the supply of good, cheap land, the urban worker in the twenties began to fear and despise any newcomer because inevitably an increasing number of them would gravitate to the cities. Similarly, the established Anglo-Saxon farmer saw his ability to expand threatened, and the

opportunity for his sons to develop the same attachment to the soil severely limited. Consequently, both groups expressed similar sentiments toward the immigrant, the task being made easier by the fact that he was from continental Europe, spoke a different language and had different customs. Periodically, joint statements were issued on the subject, both being

...of the opinion that the present policy of bringing in excessive numbers of immigrants is not to the benefit of the Dominion as a whole, inasmuch as large numbers of recent arrivals are not being assimilated, except at the expense of those who have been resident in Canada for a number of years, accentuating the economic problem and its effect on the standard of living....³⁸

The testimony presented by both farmer and labour groups to the Saskatchewan Royal Commission on Immigration and Settlement most clearly demonstrates the similarity of thought on the subject.

Because, in a general sense at least, their views were so similar they looked to the same persons for guidance and inspiration as well as to act as spokesmen for their cause. Again, Woodsworth, Irvine, and Agnes MacPhail were the most consistent examples.³⁹ Realizing their role of spokesmen for economic minorities they played their parts well. Woodsworth, for example, toured Saskatchewan almost every year after his election to Parliament in 1921, each time under the sponsorship of the Farmers' Union and later the United Farmers of Canada.⁴⁰ Reports of the tours were carried in farmer and labour newspapers alike. Consistently stressed was the fact that their economic problems were essentially the same. Thus, a delegate of the Saskatoon Trades and Labor Council was able to stand up at the 1941 TLC convention and ask for "adequate debt protection and parity of farm prices" because "labor is inseparably bound up with the prosperity of the

farmers."⁴¹

Realizing that their spiritual leaders were the same, that their economic and social problems were similar, and that their ideas and ideals were not greatly out of line, some individuals sincerely felt that the affinity was strong enough to justify a farmer-labour political party. In fact, concrete steps were taken in this direction on a number of occasions. In Saskatchewan the first attempt to formalize the relationship in the form of a party came in June, 1908, with the formation of the People's Political Association of Canada, which brought together representatives of the Comrades of Equity from Alberta, the Regina Branch of the Canadian Labor Party, the Independent Producers of Battleford District, as well as the trades and labour councils of Regina and Moose Jaw. At a two-day convention a platform of principles which ran the gamut of left-wing thinking of that period was prepared and adopted. Labour placed two men, Thomas Molloy and Hugh Peat, both of Regina, on the executive, along with such farmer gurus as the Paynter brothers of Tantallon, and plans were made for wide scale future activity. But despite the great publicity given to the convention by both the daily press and the labour periodicals, the PPA was stillborn, enthusiasm having run out within a couple of months.⁴² But the very fact that organized labour was in attendance is a credit to the enthusiasm of the charter members of the province's movement.

Over the next few years many words were written on the need to solidify farmer-labour unity with a political party, but little concerted action was taken until the pre-World War I depression and the war itself again underlined the political and economic vulnerability of Saskatchewan's residents, both urban and rural. The proposed solution

this time was to be the Federated Labor Party composed of organized labour, grain growers, and returned soldiers, organized to support a lengthy platform, again containing most of the current articles of a reformer's faith. Under it one farm editor contended that the party could be quite viable if it was "properly fed and taken care of."⁴³ But it also went the way of the Peoples' Political Association due to inaction and a lack of sustained interest.

By 1924 the mutual admiration had apparently waned to some extent, if the impression left by labour's delegates to a farmer-labour-business conference held in Regina in mid-May is any indication. After hearing the submission made by the SGGA they came away with the impression that the farmers were blaming labour's desire for higher wages as the root cause for the high cost of living. However, they drew solace from the fact that "the four delegates present from the Farmers' Union were advanced enough to be Pro-Labor."⁴⁴ But with the return of economic difficulties in the provincial economy during the next decade the more radical sector of the organized farmers gradually gained the ascendancy under the name of the UFC, and it was from this direction that serious overtures were again made for the formation of a farmer-labour party devoted to the principles of a co-operative commonwealth. The driving force behind the campaign was the UFC secretary, Frank Eliason, who used every means and every contact at his disposal toward this end.⁴⁵ Ultimately he was successful in achieving the union of the farmers' organization with the Independent Labor Party to form the Farmer-Labor Party. Many unionists cheered the joint venture,⁴⁶ and they worked as individuals with various reformers to promote its success. But as organizations the unions

would have no formal part of either the ILP as it was organized provincially, or the Farmer-Labor Party, having soured on independent political action a decade before, preferring economic co-operation instead.⁴⁷

Yet the fact that they were interested, and some unions actually affiliated with the new party's successor a decade later, indicates that there was not a serious divergence of opinion between these two important segments of Saskatchewan society.

There were factors which more deeply permeated the fabric of the society than mere similarity of ethnic background, corresponding views on basic issues, and the relative conservatism of the labour movement, that determined the real affinity that existed between the urban and the rural segments of the province. On close examination, there was a personal intimacy existing between the people of the cities and those in the surrounding countryside that greatly assisted mutual understanding. The contact had been formed with the beginning of the trade union movement shortly after the granting of provincial status to Saskatchewan. Indicative of the phenomenon was the fact that numerous unionists, among them the devoted Bill Cocks, held homesteads which they worked whenever the opportunity presented itself.⁴⁸

Similarly, Hugh Peat, a charter member of the Regina council and editor of Saskatchewan's first and only labour paper, had a farm as late as 1919 which he worked during his holidays.⁴⁹ The labour press continually alluded to numerous individuals who supplemented their incomes through their quarter sections of land.

In some ways more important than the fortunate ones who had two incomes in the development of empathy and understanding for each other's problems, were the unfortunates in the cities who continually used the

farm as an escape valve in times of economic distress. With the family farm being such a self-sufficient unit even the most severe period of economic hardship could be safely bridged. For others even less fortunate, the annual harvest absorbed all the excess manpower in the cities providing a temporary respite before they moved back to the cities.⁵⁰

While the work was generally hard and unpleasant, it did provide the urban dweller with an understanding of his rural counterpart's problems. The phenomenon was particularly apparent during the depression when many former unionists were forced to join relatives on the farm where they could at least subsist. But because of its own problems the farm could no longer act as an escape valve and many of those who had to stay in the cities suffered real hardship.⁵¹ At the same time redundant farm labour sought refuge in the province's cities, bringing to focus an opposite movement that had been going on for years. Whether the farmer desired it or not, a larger number of each generation of offspring from the farm gravitated to the cities, either because of a lack of opportunity or in search of adventure. There they took up trades and many joined unions, but almost inevitably, twice a year at seeding and harvest times, they went back to the farm to assist on the land that they would inherit, at least in part. Thus, there was a continuous ebb and flow from the farm, to the city, and back to the farm. This tidal action created an intellectual proximity and the congenital empathy between farmer and urban dweller.

In short, the farm sustained the city because the city was merely a service centre for the immediately surrounding farming community as well as a sponge for overflow farm labour. Thus, the city and country complemented each other so well that the dividing line between

the two societies was virtually indistinguishable.

Viewed within a larger perspective, although the Saskatchewan rural-urban scene was at the lower end of the metropolitan chain of dominance, it was not marked by the sharp contrast between metropolis and hinterland which usually prevailed elsewhere. As J.M.S. Careless, the foremost articulator of the metropolitan interpretation of Canadian development has explained it, the urban area has consistently exercised a social, political and economic influence over a hinterland:

...this implies the emergence of a city of outstanding size to dominate not only its surrounding countryside but other cities and their countrysides, the whole area being organized by the metropolis through control of communications, trade and finance, into one economic and social unit that is focussed on the metropolitan 'centre of dominance'....

Metropolitan influence operates at various levels:

But the metropolitan relationship is a chain, almost a feudal chain of vassalage, wherein one city may stand tributary to a bigger centre and yet be the metropolis of a sizeable region of its own. Thus, for example, Winnipeg is Montreal's subsidiary but is the metropolis of a large area of the prairie west.⁵²

Although Careless is developing a thesis based on the data of commercial-financial relations, i.e. the activities of businessmen, the thesis can be seen as applying as well to the world of labour unionism. This study has attempted to examine the organized labour movement in cities which fall within the hinterland of the Montreal-Toronto industrial and financial complex, and Winnipeg, in that order. Although many Saskatchewan unionists came from the British Isles with their distinctive social and political ideals, they had to function largely within a union structure dictated from the United States and from central Canada. The cavalier manner in which Saskatchewan unions were treated by the parent bodies in the metropolitan centres bears witness to the status of vassal which

was inherent in the relationship.

The control and influence of Winnipeg was more immediately felt. Although the Congress assisted, the prime initiative for organizing in Saskatchewan cities came from the Winnipeg Trades and Labor Council in 1906 and 1907. But even before that, the western headquarters for the railway lodges were established in and around Manitoba's capital. The western Canadian representatives for a large number of unions made their homes there because of good rail connections to all centres. The most influential labour newspapers in western Canada with the largest circulations--The Voice (1897-1918), The Western Labor News (1918-1923), The Weekly News (1925-1934) and the One Big Union Bulletin (1919-1934)--were published in Winnipeg to carry the news and views of Winnipeg to unionists throughout the hinterland. When the economic and political situation became unbearable during the First World War, much of the most vocal protest came from Winnipeg, and many of the leaders of the One Big Union were from that city, which was its base of operations. The most obvious overt manifestation of discontent occurred there, and unionists in other centres tried to follow Winnipeg's lead by extending the general strike. Later, much of the inspiration for the re-establishment of such organizations as the Independent Labor Party came from that city, as did the foremost and most travelled exponent of the co-operative commonwealth, J.S. Woodsworth, under whom reform opinion ultimately solidified into a viable political party.

Within Winnipeg's hinterland Regina unionists tried to establish dominance over the smaller, slower developing centres in their province. Their early attempt to found a provincial labour press is important in this regard. But they failed, not through lack of enthusiasm or effort,

but because communication between the cities was such that each trade union centre became a self-contained unit. What ultimately happened was the establishment of closer relations and better understanding between the city and its surrounding farming community than existed between unionists in the several cities. The ebb and flow of population referred to earlier, was instrumental in establishing urban-rural harmony. In addition, the Western Union Printer makes reference in its gossip column to numerous typographers and printers who eventually became editors of small-town newspapers, thus affecting the flow of ideas.

More populous cities in Canada which had achieved a higher scale of development with large hinterlands did not have the amicable understanding of rural problems because they were much more independent, and their interests were much more directed toward exploitation. In the case of such cities, like Winnipeg, what D.C. Masters in his book The Winnipeg General Strike refers to as "congenital antipathy" existed between the urban and rural populations.⁵³ Besides, for most of those inhabiting Winnipeg's hinterland, the city was too remote to visit and therefore difficult to understand.

In contrast, the hinterlands of Saskatchewan's cities were quite narrowly circumscribed and thus were quite accessible, at least periodically, by most of the people residing therein. C.A. Dawson and Eva R. Younge in Chapter IV of their book Pioneering in the Prairie Provinces: The Social Side of the Settlement Process, allude to the narrowly circumscribed hinterland in examining circulation of daily newspapers to establish the bounds of a city's trading area and determine the dependence of the hinterland on the urban centre. While

Winnipeg papers, and thus its trading area, reached throughout the west, the dailies of Saskatchewan's two principal cities, Regina and Saskatoon, reached out only a limited distance with little overlapping.

Dawson and Younge also point out that "in certain trading and industrial functions, Regina shares the southern half of the province with the city of Moose Jaw. In a similar way Saskatoon shares a part of its northern hinterland with the city of Prince Albert."⁵⁴ Thus, while an affinity of interest was present between city and hinterland, whatever co-operative instincts existed between unionists in the province's cities developed on a Regina-Moose Jaw versus Saskatoon-Prince Albert basis. This alignment occurred only during the Second World War and was based more on animosity than on a desire for unity.⁵⁵ It was characteristic of a movement that was divided for all sorts of reasons--political, economic, ideological, occupational, geographic and social--in spite of concerted attempts by conscientious leaders to correct the situation.

Thus the relationship between unions in the various urban centres for most of the period 1905-1945 was tenuous. Because the cities served the sole function of service centres for their narrowly circumscribed hinterlands, they never developed a sufficiently diversified economic base to attract labour organizations interested in concentrating their activities on the province's workers until the Second World War. Only then, with great increases in members, did the movement become a significant factor in Saskatchewan society; at this point there was a greater tendency to antagonize inhabitants of the rural area. But for almost the first four decades of the province's existence its trade union movement, dominated by the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada,

was weak and divided but never out of sympathy with the society within which it developed.

FOOTNOTES FOR CONCLUSION

¹Clarence Lyle Barber, "Unemployment Relief in Saskatoon," Honours thesis, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, 1940, p. 4.

²Alma Lawton, "Urban Relief in Saskatchewan During the Years of Depression, 1930-39," M.A. thesis, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, 1969, p. 5.

³Royal Commission on Industrial Relations, 1919, Minutes of Evidence, Evidence of A. Hamilton (Moose Jaw Mayor), p. 1249.

⁴Ibid., Evidence of W.E. Stephenson (of MJT&LC), pp. 1260-1.

⁵Ibid., Evidence of Robert Blackburn (Building Commissioner to Saskatoon Public School Board), p. 1079.

⁶Ibid., Evidence of C.J. Yorath (Saskatoon City Commissioner), p. 1093.

⁷RT&LC files, MJT&LC to Minister of Finance, n.d.; Bennett Papers, 489367-8, Dennis Shannon to Bennett, Oct. 17, 1933.

⁸RT&LC files, D. McNiven to Cocks, June 12, 1941.

⁹R.M. Sherdahl, "The Saskatchewan General Election of 1944," M.A. thesis, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, 1966, pp. 135-6.

¹⁰Saskatchewan Department of Labour Report, 1961, p. 42.

¹¹Saskatchewan Department of Labour file I 16(2), Molloy's answer to questionnaire from Department of Labour, n.d. (1935).

¹²P.W. Haffner interview, Regina, Jan. 14, 1970.

¹³Borden Papers, file 515, Chief Commissioner of Police to the Minister of Justice, May 23, 1918.

¹⁴See Chapter IV.

¹⁵See Chapter V for more details.

¹⁶Saskatchewan Bureau of Labour and Department of Labour Reports.

¹⁷Turner's Weekly, May 24, 1919. See also May 31, 1919.

¹⁸RT&LC Minutes, April 12, 1920, meeting.

¹⁹See UFC(SS) file SI R283.

²⁰Ibid., file X60, Eliason to Isbister (ST&LC secretary), Feb. 16, 1931.

²¹The Worker, Jan. 5, 1924.

²²The Weekly News, May 2, 1930, p. 4.

²³RT&LC Minutes, March 8, 1920; RT&LC files, Broadly to RT&LC, March 8, 1920.

²⁴RLO, 1930, p. 185.

²⁵UFC(SS) file X-60, Eliason to Eddy, April 4, 1930, Eliason to A.J.M. Wallace, April 17, 1931.

²⁶Ibid., Eliason to Eddy, March 23, 1931.

²⁷Ibid., file X-3c, Eliason to Woodsworth, Aug. 28, 1930. See also The Weekly News, Sept. 18, 1925 for a resolution passed by the Farmers' Union of Canada supporting a motion made by Woodsworth in the House of Commons.

²⁸See UFC(SS) file X-3c, Eliason to Woodsworth, April 18 and May 21, 1931; file X-60, Eliason to Heseltine and J.M. Toothill, June 13, 1931.

²⁹Ibid., file X-60, Eliason to Heseltine, April 20, 1931.

³⁰Ibid., Heseltine to Eliason, April 30, 1931.

³¹Ibid., W. Armstrong to UFC(SS), May 6, 1931.

³²Ibid., Eliason to Heseltine, June 5, 1931; Leader Post, June 20, 1931, June 23, 1931; The Weekly News, July 10, 1931.

³³Editorial from The Western Producer reprinted in The Weekly News, May 2, 1930.

³⁴Alberta Labor News, Aug. 18, 1928.

³⁵The Weekly News, May 14, 1926.

³⁶The Leader, July 11, 1927.

³⁷RT&LC Minutes, July 10, 1933, meeting.

³⁸UFC(SS) files, UFC Publications Temporary Folder, "UFC: On immigration", Robson (UFC)-Dealtry (ST&LC) resolution presented to Conference on Immigration, Saskatoon, Aug. 14, 1928.

³⁹Ibid., file X-3c, Eliason to Woodsworth, Aug. 28, 1930.

⁴⁰The Weekly News, July 22, 1927, Dec. 7, 1928, July 19, 1929.

⁴¹Saskatchewan Commonwealth, Oct. 8, 1941.

⁴²The Morning Leader, June 11 and 12, 1908; Moose Jaw Times, June 16, 1908; The Daily Phoenix, June 12 and 13, 1908; The Voice, June 5 and 19, 1908, Saskatchewan Labor's Realm, June 12, 19, 28, July 3 and 10, 1908.

⁴³Turner's Weekly, May 31, 1919, see also May 3, 1919; Western Labor News, Jan. 24 and Feb. 28, 1919; The Morning Leader, March 21, 1919.

⁴⁴RT&LC files, Delegates Report of Economic Conference Held in Council Chamber of City Hall, Regina, May 13 & 14, 1924.

⁴⁵See UFC(SS) files X-60 and XII-H143 for Eliason's correspondence on the matter of a farmer-labour party.

⁴⁶The Weekly News, March 7, 1930.

⁴⁷See Chapter VII.

⁴⁸Saskatchewan Labor's Realm, July 31, 1908.

⁴⁹Western Union Printer, Sept. 27, 1919.

⁵⁰Royal Commission on Industrial Relations, 1919, pp. 1053, 1130.

⁵¹Bennett Papers, 488816-7, T.A. Clark (secretary Melville ILP) to Bennett, June 16, 1931.

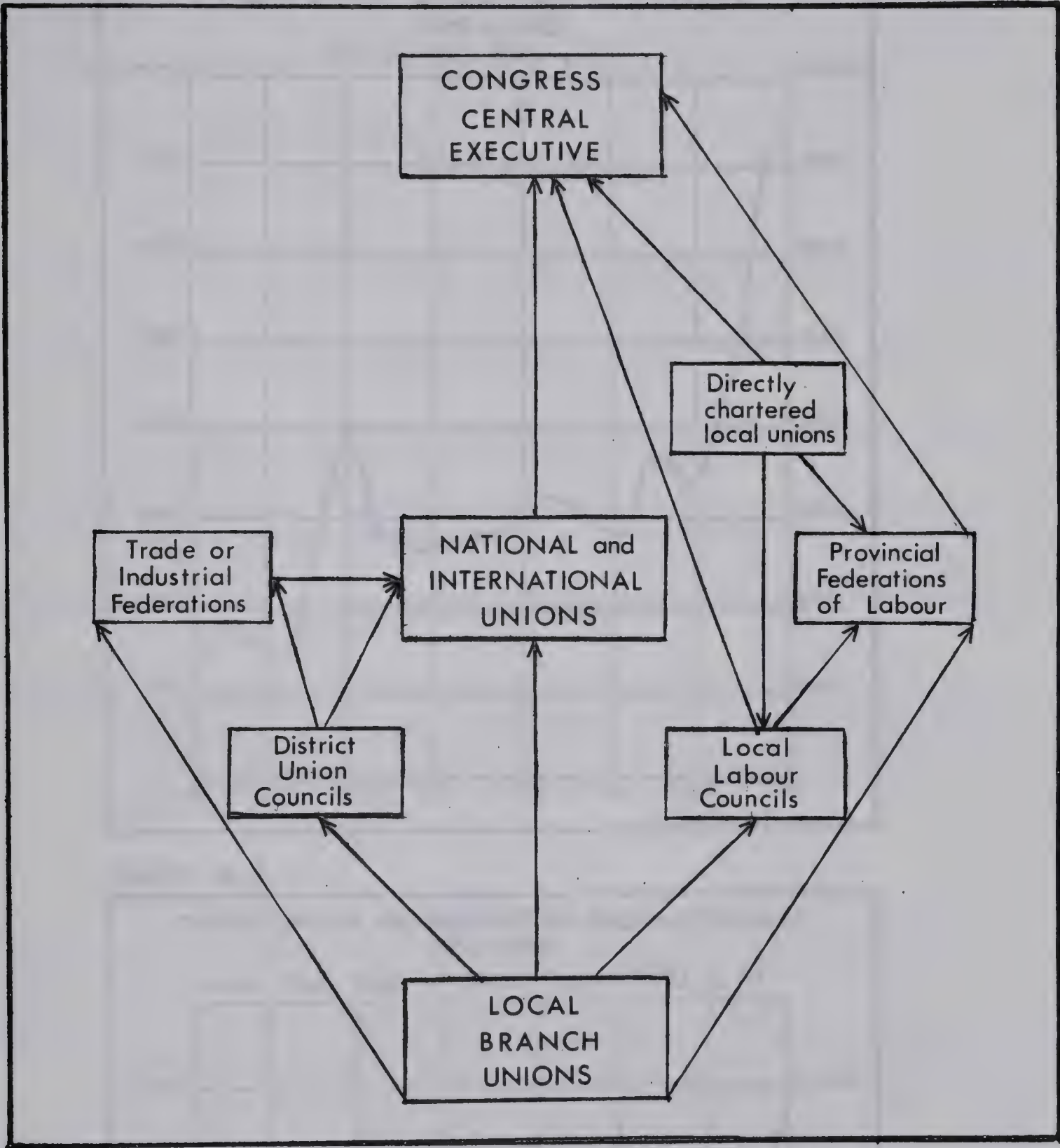
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⁵⁴C.A. Dawson and Eva R. Younge, Pioneering in the Prairie Provinces: The Social Side of the Settlement Process, (Toronto: 1940), p. 44.

⁵⁵See Chapter IX for more details.

CHART No. 1



Source: RLO, 1945, p. 21.

STRUCTURE OF LEADING LABOUR CONGRESSES IN CANADA

1945

APPENDIX B

CHART No. 2

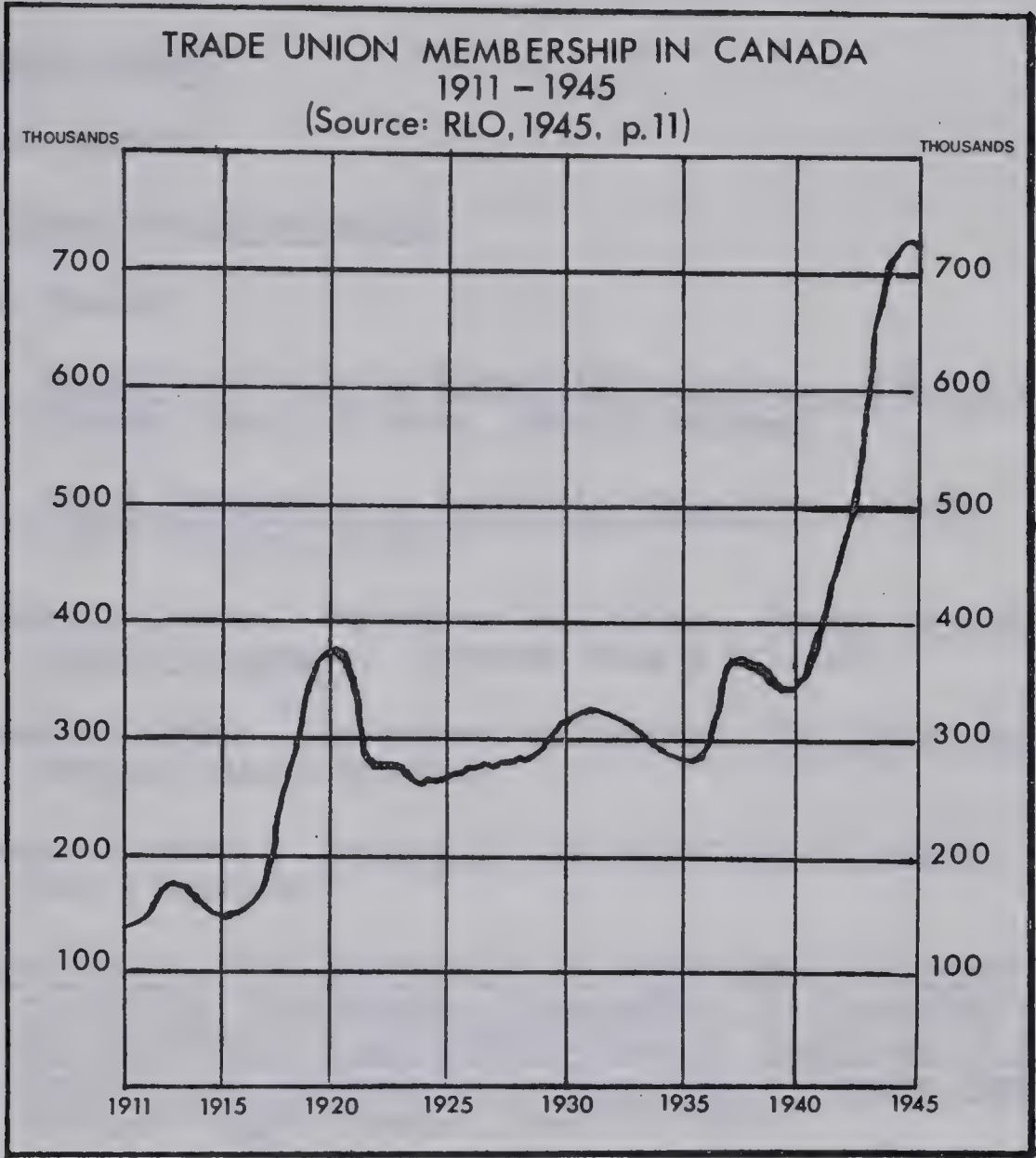
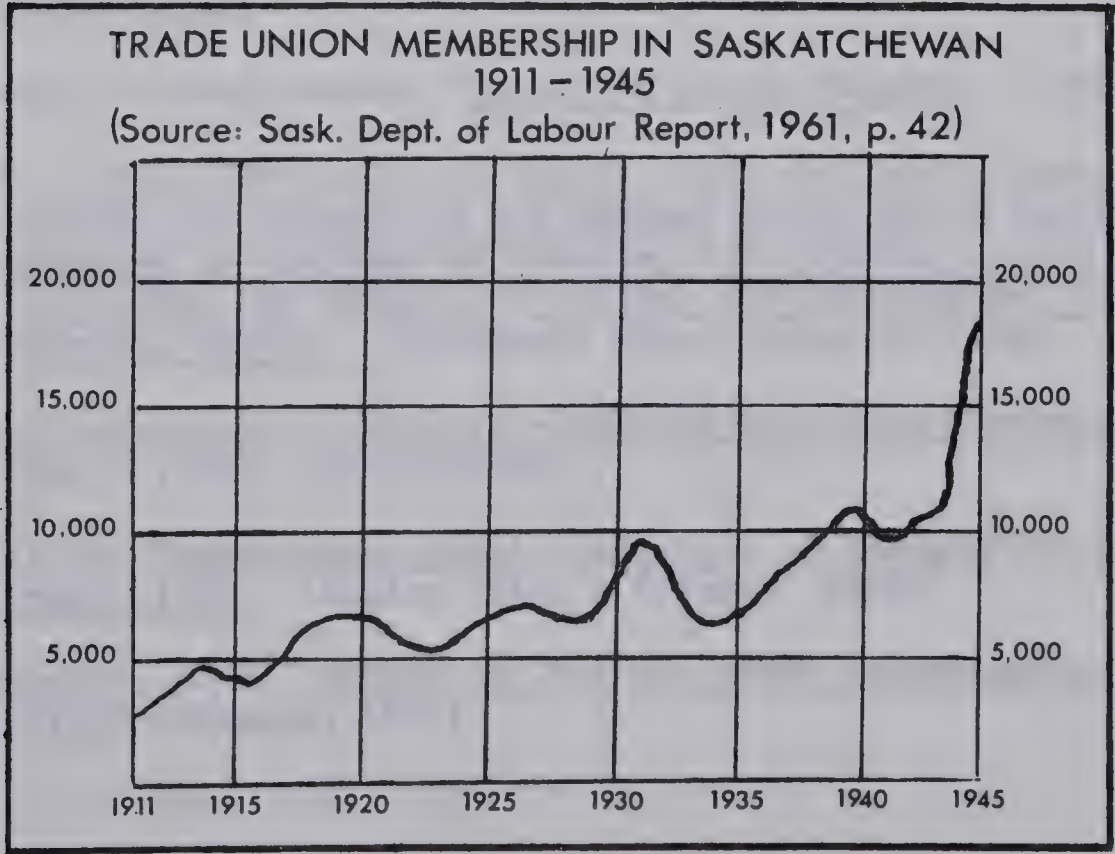


CHART No. 3



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Secretary of State files, RG 6, E1, PAC.

(b) Provincial

Legislative Assembly Office files, SA. Official Reports of Conferences between the Government of Saskatchewan and various organizations. Files: 117, 121, 143, 165, 178, 184, 191, 192, 194(a), 195, 196(a), 197, 199, 207, 209(a), 215, 220, 221, 225, 229, 230, 234, 235, 240, 244, 252.

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Note: In the case of records where no depository has been cited, they are still in the hands of the organization.

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CCF Records, MG 28 IV-1, PAC.

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W. L. M. King Papers, PAC.

Wilfrid Laurier Papers, PAC.

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(b) Provincial

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